

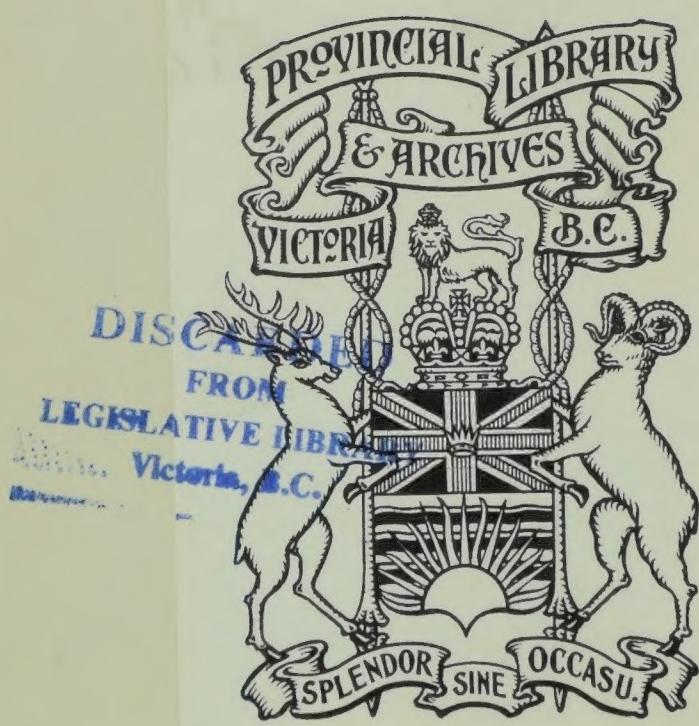
HIGHROADS OF HISTORY

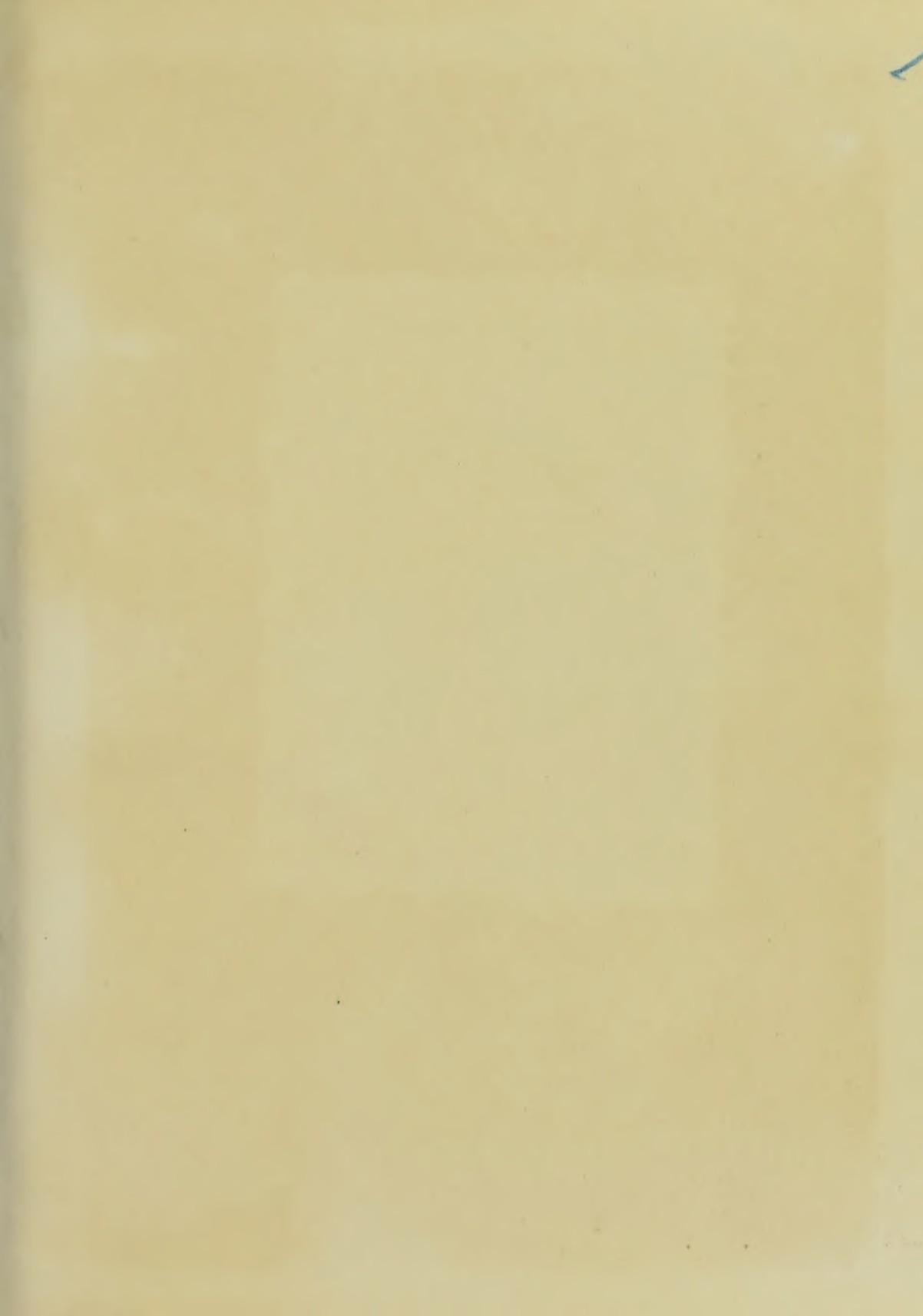
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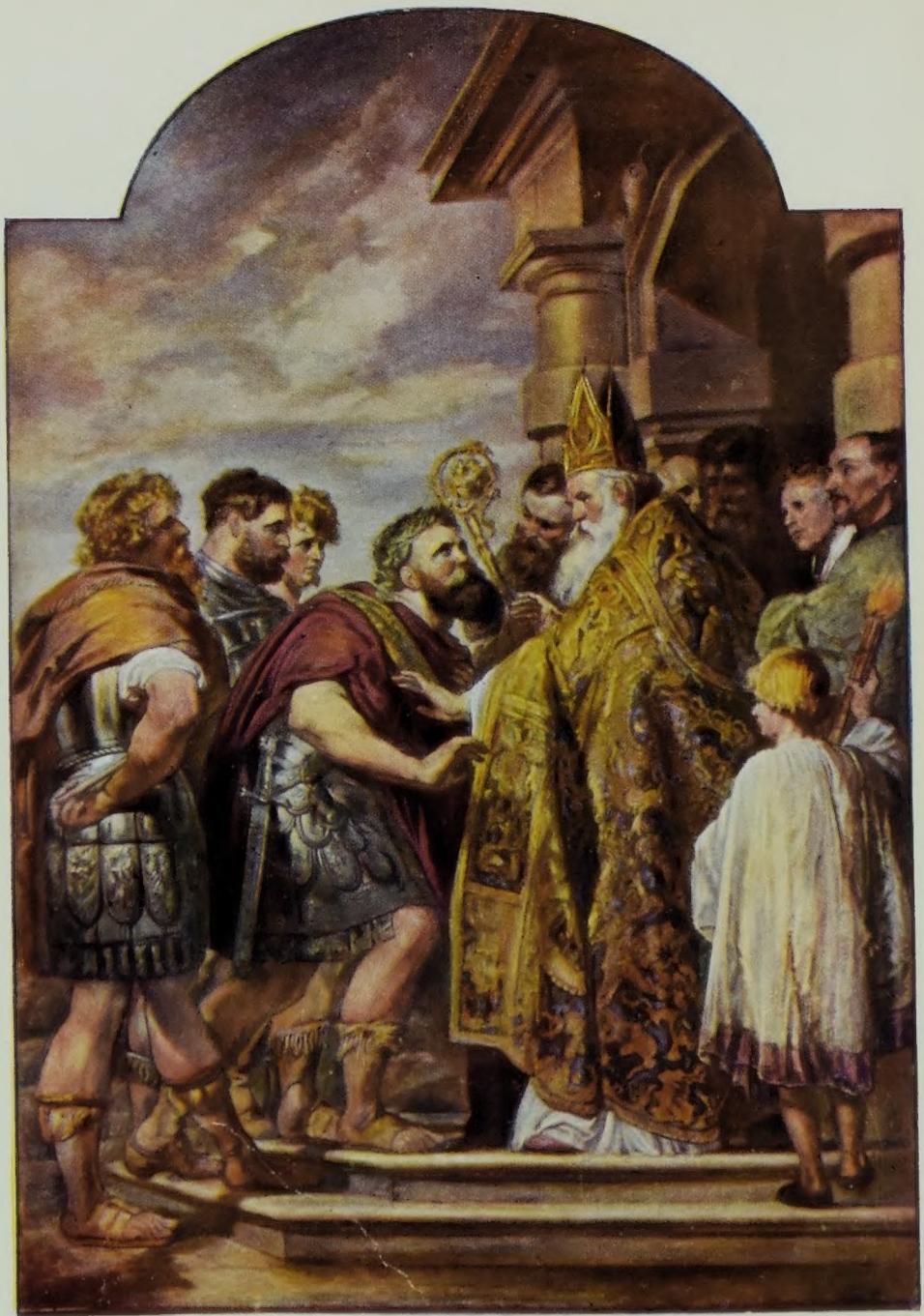


ROYAL
SCHOOL
SERIES

THOMAS NELSON AND SONS







Ambrose repulsing Theodosius.

(From the painting by Rubens, in Vienna. Photo by Hanfstaengl.)

See page 226.

THE ROYAL SCHOOL SERIES

Highroads of History

Book IX.

Highroads of General
History

By

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Author of "Makers of Europe," etc.

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HIGHROADS OF GENERAL HISTORY.

Chapter I.

EGYPT, THE LAND OF THE SPHINX.

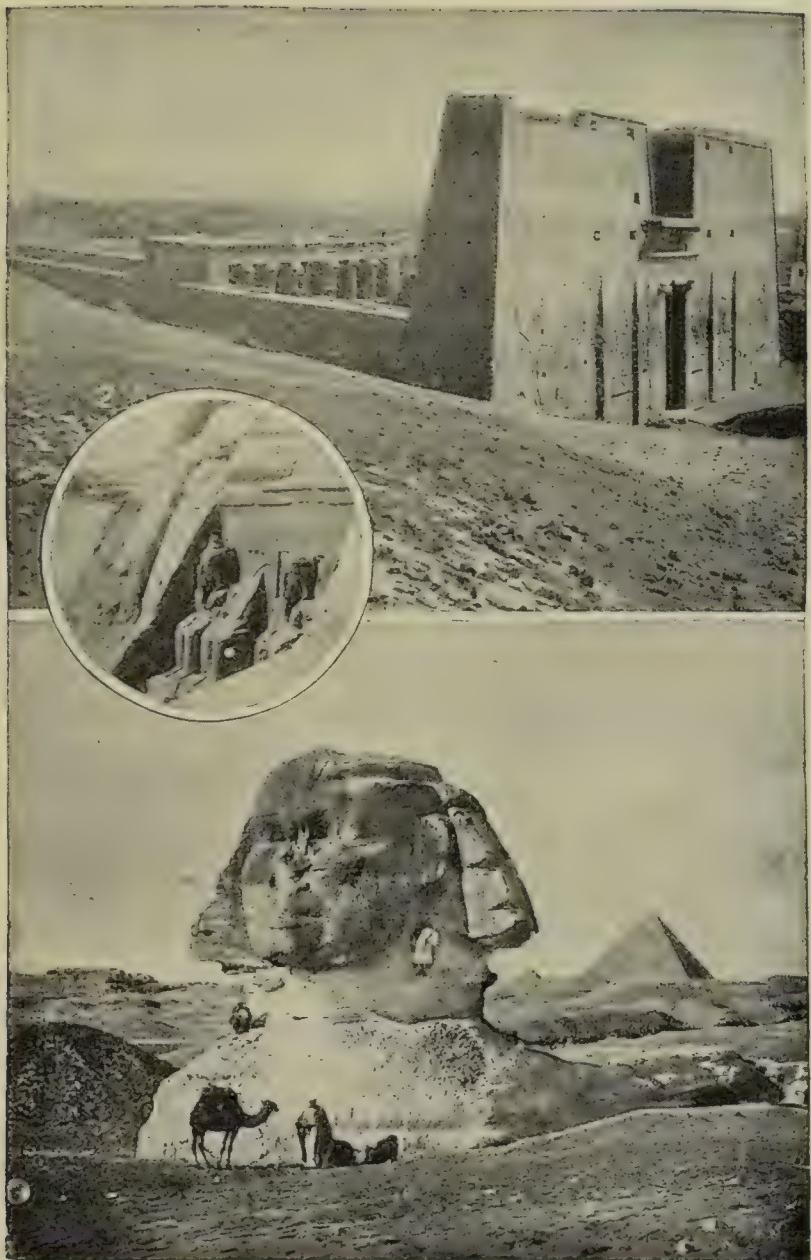
IN the heart of Egypt, keeping watch over one of her mighty pyramids, crouches that mysterious figure known to us as the Sphinx. It represents a human head upon the body of a lion, and, while giving a vivid impression of mighty physical strength, it suggests also the triumph of mind and intellect over brute force. The face wears a strange, inscrutable smile, as though possessed of the stored wisdom of the ages, and as though it could explain all the hidden mysteries of the world if it chose to speak.

For more than fifty-six centuries, as nearly as we can reckon, the Sphinx has crouched there—silent, forceful, mysterious, a fitting emblem of the ancient race whose land it still seems to guard. For the Ancient Egyptians were one of the earliest nations to

struggle out of that primitive stage of man's existence, when his highest achievement was to shape and sharpen his stone weapon in order to kill for his daily food.

Thirty-six centuries at least before the birth of our Lord, Egypt could claim to possess a very high degree of civilization. Now civilization is nothing more than the triumph of man's mind over his lower nature; so that this mighty figure of the Sphinx, half human, half animal, is a perfect emblem of a people that had learned the secrets of such highly civilized arts as those of sculpture and architecture at a time when the greater part of the world was blindly groping about after such a simple thing as the use of fire or the polishing of stones.

Let us take Egypt, then, as one of the earliest—if not the very earliest—of the great empires that have helped to make the history of the world. It is a long, long “highroad of history” down which we have to travel—a highroad represented probably by more than fifty-six hundred years. But the journey is well worth while, not only because it brings us to a land full of curious romance and colour and mystery, but also because we shall find there certain forms of civilization beyond which we have not advanced at the present day. Even the Egyptians themselves seem to have known that they possessed a history full of such strange interest as to be scarcely realized in future years; for in one of the ancient books still in



EGYPTIAN ARCHITECTURE.

1. Temple at Edu. 2. Rock Temple at Abu-Simbel. 3. The Great Sphinx, Ghizeh.

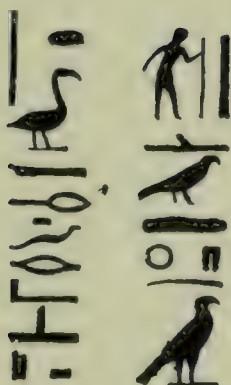
existence, written by a scribe whose hand has been still for many long centuries, we find these words:—

“O Egypt, fables alone will be thy future history, wholly incredible to later generations, and nought but the letters of thy stone-engraved monuments will survive.”

Let us see then, first of all, what the letters and pictures on these “stone-engraved monuments” can tell us of the life and character of the people of the land of the Sphinx.

A visit to the Egyptian Gallery in the British Museum shows us something of life in the days before the beginning of actual history. We shall find there a “prehistoric tomb,” wherein lies a warrior of the age when man’s only weapon was one of stone. His long smooth hands are more like those of a modern man of letters than of one whose daily food had to be won by sheer brute force; and we may guess, from the carefully-finished pots and weapons placed in his tomb, that he was no ordinary warrior, but an honoured chieftain of his tribe.

From him we turn to the pictures on the mighty tombs and temples which form so marked a feature of the land. The Egyptians were extremely fond of self-expression by means of these pictures. Their “hieroglyphic” writing is nothing but a series of what we may call abbreviated pictures, in which each idea is represented by a tiny sketch of a bird or animal or



man, or by part of these, as the case may be. But the pictures on the tombs are large and remarkably distinct, even after the lapse of so many years, and give us a wonderful glimpse of the life of the people.

First of all, we shall notice that there are two distinct races depicted. The one, which probably represents the original race, shows men and women with fair hair, light skins, regular oval faces, and lips slightly projecting. Both men and women wear their hair short; but the beards of the men, often false, were worn long and divided, with stiffly turned-up points. This is the ruling class.

The other type of people shows a low forehead, heavy jaw, and thick, projecting lips, and is more like that of the negro race. It probably represents an influx of immigrants from some neighbouring country, possibly from Babylonia, who may have brought with them the art of metal-working, which was certainly known from very early times by the people of that land. This is the subject people.

The king and the nobles of Ancient Egypt lived in a dignified and thoughtful manner, not untouched with quiet melancholy, and an almost morbid love of reflection upon the end of life. At feasts it was the custom for a slave to carry round the hall the representation of a mummied corpse, saying to each guest in turn, "Look at this, and so eat and drink; for be sure that such as this some day thou shalt be." But

among the ordinary people the case seems to have been quite otherwise. The sculptures and paintings show us a light-hearted folk—dancing, singing, and laughing over their work—jeering in droll fashion at the antics of their neighbours.

The people of Egypt were divided into five classes. First came the nobility, with the monarch at the head. The latter was possessed of almost absolute power, and as the representative of the great Sun-god Râ was worshipped as divine.

Then came the priests, in whose hands were all the learning and literature of the land, as well as the immense riches which were showered upon the temples of the gods.

The next class, the army, was kept in a high state of discipline and efficiency, and was well equipped with chariots, scaling-ladders, battering-rams, and all the equipment of warfare.

Fourth and fifth came the husbandmen and artisans, who had few rights, and were in position little better than slaves.

In the last class were included weavers, painters, sculptors, masons, and workers in wood and metal, who were certainly among the most useful members of the state.

The picture most often found upon the walls of the Egyptian Gallery shows us a large figure of the lord of a district, drawn the full length of the slab, and

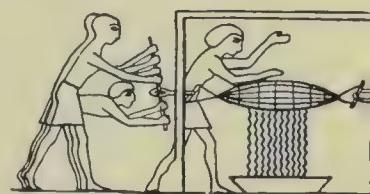
holding in his hand a small stick, the outward token of authority. In the different compartments into which the rest of the wall is divided we see his slaves at their work—hunting, fishing, digging, making bricks or building temples, and watched closely by the overseer, who stands by with uplifted whip.

Near by we see flocks of sheep treading the seed thrown broadcast into the soft mud left by the Nile after its yearly flood. So fertile was this soil that it would bring forth a crop of grain and two crops of grass or vegetables in the same year.

In another picture the slaves are busy pressing grapes or gathering dates from the palm trees. Here, too, we find pictures of the lovely lotus-flower, which became the model of many of their architectural decorations, and of the tall papyrus reed from which was produced the "hieratica," or tough writing-paper used by the priests.

The Egyptians provide a marked contrast in one respect to other Eastern nations, even of the present day. Their women were not shut up in seclusion or kept as slaves, but were treated with deference; and when married, lived in much comfort, and even luxury, with their husbands. In the two-storied brick houses of the well-to-do people we find sofas, chairs, and ornamental cushions by no means unlike those found in English homes nowadays.

The religion of these people is set forth in a most



interesting fashion in the series of wall-paintings to be seen in the Gallery, taken from the famous "Book of the Dead." Their chief object of worship was the Sun-god, upon whom depended in great measure their food, wealth, and even their lives.

The Sun-god was honoured under various forms. As Amen-Râ, the "Mid-day Sun," he had his special centre of worship at Heliopolis, the "City of the Sun." When evening approached, thousands of devoted worshippers watched the course of Tum, the "Setting Sun," as he floated in his golden boat through the upper air on his journey to the regions of the under-world. From thence he rose next morning, with youth renewed, as the god Har. From Har came forth the soul which lodged in each new-born babe, and which at death, descending to the Hall of Truth, was judged by Osiris, "Ruler of the Under-World," with his scales of justice in his hand, holding in one scale a statue of divine justice, in the other the human soul. If the latter stood the test, it was caught up, purified and strengthened, to the boat of the Sun-god, and borne off to that land of the blest of which every form of religion tells us something. The soul that was found wanting passed through the House of Truth, and reappeared upon the earth either within the body of an animal or within that of a slave.

At Memphis, we learn, the people worshipped Apis, the sacred bull, who lived in a temple of his own,



EGYPTIAN FUNERAL CEREMONIES.

(By permission, from the large facsimile sheets of the "Book of the Dead," published by the Department of Oriental Antiquities, British Museum.)

The upper part shows the mummy on a boat-shaped hearse drawn by oxen, the wife kneeling beside it, and a priest officiating in front. In the lower part the mummy is supported upright in front of the tomb by Anubis, the wife again kneeling; priests officiate at a table of offerings—one reads the funeral service, and one brings forward an offering; behind are mourners. The cow and calf symbolize the Rising Sun, and Heaven.

was fed with the finest food, and had a crowd of attendants to wait upon him, including priests, grooms, slaves, a chamberlain to make his bed, a cup-bearer to bring him water, and a valet to brush and comb his glossy coat. When one sacred bull died, his body was embalmed, decked with jewels, and placed in a marble tomb. If a cat died, the whole of the family to which it belonged mourned and wept; for, apart from its having been the resting-place of some part of the divine nature, it was quite possibly the abode of some relative who had passed away.

The most striking manifestation of the Sun-god was, however, the king himself, who thus became an object of worship to his subjects. Thus it came about that among the gods we find Osiris, afterwards ruler of the under-world, but originally king of Upper and Lower Egypt. Of him the legend tells us that he was murdered by Set, his jealous brother, and was thrown in a coffin into the river Nile, which bore it out to sea.

Now, Osiris had a faithful wife, named Isis, who never ceased to search for the body of her lord, which at length she found, cast up on the Syrian sands. She was about to take it to Memphis to be embalmed and buried, when the wicked Set descended upon her, cut up the body into fourteen pieces, and hid them in different places. But Isis, travelling up and down the river in her frail boat made of the papyrus plant,



never rested till she had searched all Egypt, and had found all the fragments and buried them. Having accomplished this herself, she summoned her son Horus to punish Set ; but when the latter was taken prisoner, divine pity seized her, and she set him free. This enraged Horus, who forthwith struck off her head ; but the gods, who loved her for her mercy, at once replaced it with the head of the sacred cow. All these deities—Isis, Osiris, Horus, and even the evil Set—became objects of worship ; but perhaps the most interesting point of the Osiris legend lies in the immense importance attached to a proper form of burial. For every Egyptian firmly believed that the body, if carefully preserved from decay, would once again be stirred by the breath of life ; and in this belief we trace the probable origin of the Pyramids, those mysterious buildings, beautifully painted and adorned even in parts which could never see the light of day, because they were the home of the bodies that were to rise again.

These Pyramids are of such a size as to be striking witnesses to the skill and industry of the Egyptians. Pliny, the Roman historian, tells us that three hundred and sixty thousand men were employed for twenty years in the construction of the Great Pyramid. Its original height must have been about a hundred and twenty feet above that of the dome of St. Paul's Cathedral, and some of the stones used in its fabric

must weigh at least fifty tons. How these latter were ever raised to such a height has puzzled many generations, just as that early writer had foretold.

It is probable that, in that land of abundant human life, the whole erection was the work of thousands of slaves, who pulled the immense blocks up an inclined plane by sheer physical force.

Beneath the base of the Great Pyramid we pass through a long sloping rock passage to an inner room, from which an ascending passage leads through the heart of the Pyramid to an arched apartment called the Queen's Chamber. From this point a long gallery passes to the topmost room, the Chamber of the King. Here was found a stone receptacle for a coffin, supposed to have been intended as a last resting-place for Khufu, the king who built the Pyramid. Into the chamber lead two ventilation shafts, which keep the air of the room pure and dry.

A still more interesting memorial of the life of Ancient Egypt is to be found in the ruins of the Temple of Karnak.

This consists mainly of an immense hall, half as long again as Canterbury Cathedral, divided by lofty pillars into five avenues. The walls of this temple are covered with picture writing and with drawings, giving a fairly complete history of the people at various periods. Out of this central hall open nine small rooms, inscribed with figures of the god and goddess



On the Nile.
(By R. Talbot Kelly, R.B.A.)

of learning, who are named respectively the "President of the Hall of Books" and the "Lady of Letters." They form an Egyptian library, robbed of its treasures by modern hands, but bearing eloquent witness to the honour paid to books by a race which loved knowledge above rubies. Hidden away in the tombs has been found almost every kind of literature—romances, fairy tales, adventures, hymns, and moral essays.

Here are a few lines from one of the latter:—

" Mind thee of the day when thou too shalt start for the land
 To which one goeth never to return.
 Good for thee then will have been an honourable life ;
 Therefore be just and hate transgressions."



Negroes and Asiatics adoring the king.

Chapter II.

THE STORY OF THE PHARAOHS

(C. 2000-1400 B.C.)

BENEATH the busy, flourishing modern town of Cairo lie buried the ruins of Memphis, the oldest city in the world, and the capital of Ancient Egypt.

Memphis was the seat of Menes, first founder of the Empire of Egypt, who belongs to that shadowy region of history where truth and fable are scarcely to be distinguished. But Menes was in all probability a real

(1,447)

person, and to him, possibly, was first given the title of "Pharaoh," borne by all the rulers of Egypt in their turn. His successors during the next ten or eleven centuries were busied in raising the Pyramids and other mighty buildings in the land. After their time, during the Middle Empire of Egypt, we find an interesting group of Pharaohs known as the Antef kings.

One of these, surnamed the "Hunter," is depicted on his tomb surrounded by his favourite dogs, each with his name—"White Gazelle," "Spotted Sphinx," and "Blackie"—upon his collar.

From these same tomb-pictures we find that these kings built ships and carried on a trade in gems and spices with Arabia.

During these days the people of the land lived in much peace and happiness, and their appreciation of their rulers is seen in the titles given to them, such as "Beginner of Justice," "Lord of Two Lands," "Giver of Life to Two Lands," "Renewer of Life."

We are not surprised to find that under these rulers love of their native land became one of the chief characteristics of the people.

A famous story of this time tells us how a certain soldier, named Sanehat, had incurred the jealous dislike of the reigning Pharaoh's eldest son, and on hearing of the latter's accession to the throne, fled from the country, fearing for his life.

Hiding by day, and travelling only by night, Sanehat came at length to the desert, through which he wandered without food or drink, till he dropped almost lifeless to the ground.



Presently to his failing ears came the sound of the lowing of kine, and looking up he saw a "foreign man" bending over him and offering him a drink of warm milk. When he had revived, the stranger took him to his tribe and treated him with much kindness. But his nearness to his own land made Sanehat restless, and he escaped to Edom, where a certain prince showed him favour, and made him chief of a tribe, so that he ate every day bread and wine, roasted meat, fowls and game.

Before long he had won a name for his skill in putting down highway robbers, and became the general of an army, "marching where he would and doing what he would ; and the power of life and death was in his hands."

Yet the heart of the exiled Egyptian never ceased to yearn after his native land ; and when he was old he sent to the Pharaoh then ruling over Egypt and implored permission to return to the place "where his heart had always lived," and there to lay his bones.

This was at once granted him, and once more we see the importance attached to burial in the king's assurance that when he is dead, "They shall follow thy funeral bier with its gilded mummy-case, with its head painted

blue, and a canopy made of the wood of the acacia tree spread over thee. The oxen shall draw thee along, and the mourners shall go before thee uttering cries of lamentation, and women seated at the doors of thy tomb shall address prayers unto thee. . . . Thou shalt not be buried in a sheepskin only, for all people shall smite the earth and lament over thy body as thou goest to the tomb."

One of these kings, Amen-em-hat the First, has come down to us as a mighty hunter. "I hunted the lion and brought back the crocodile a prisoner," he proudly boasts. But his chief honour lies in the simple epitaph : "He stood on the boundaries of the land to keep watch on its borders ; and all the people loved him."

Belonging to the days of one of his successors (Usert-sen the Second) we find a picture showing in detail what was evidently a noteworthy event.

A tribe of Semitic people, to which race the Israelites belonged, ask permission to settle down on the fruitful plains of Egypt. They carry arrows, clubs, and spears, and some of them hold oddly-shaped instruments of music. They wear long loose clothes, and are shown in the act of making a peace-offering of goats and curious dyes to the king.

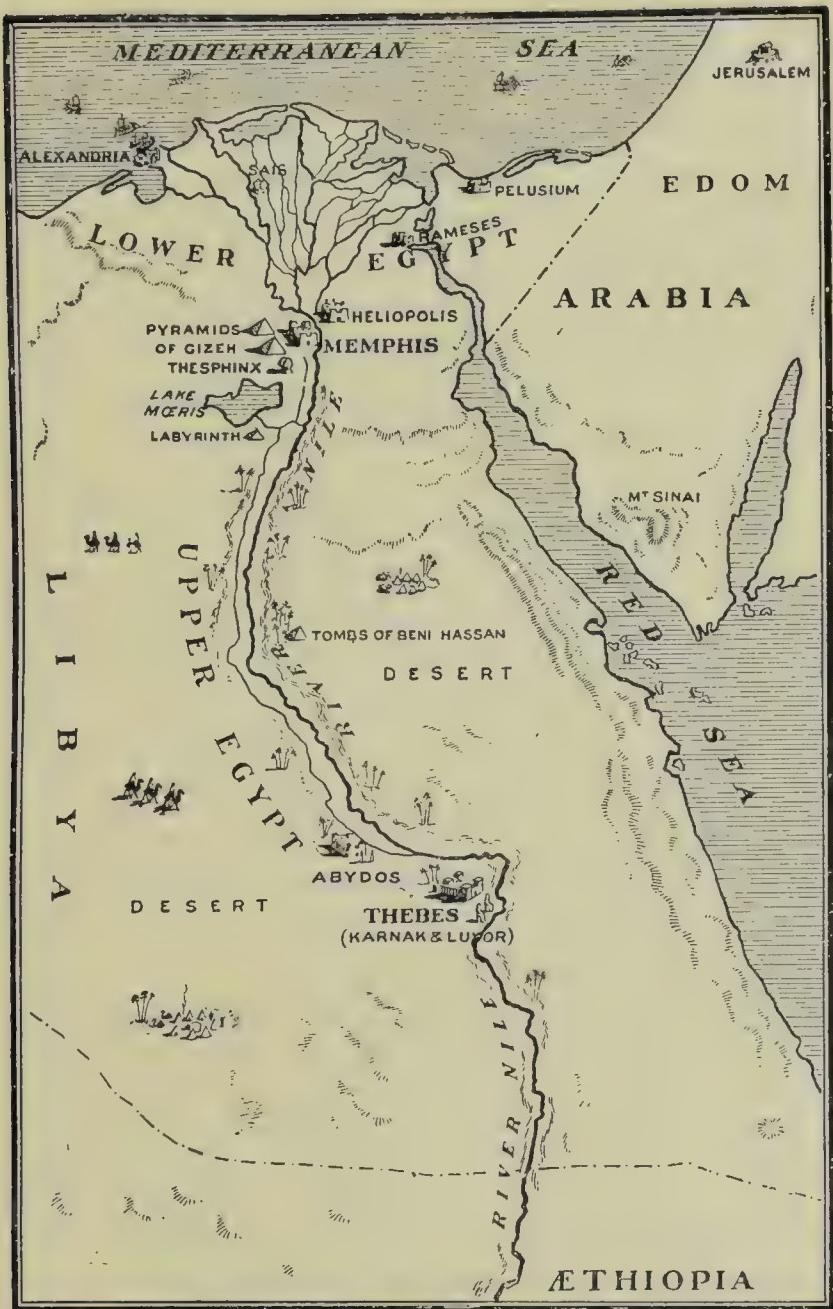
This reminds us of the settlement made by Jacob and his sons, some centuries later, in the land of Egypt, when Joseph had "found favour in the sight of Pharaoh."

It was possibly during this same period of quiet growth and prosperity that Abraham paid the visit to Egypt of which we read in the Book of Genesis. The ruling Pharaoh is likely to have been Amen-em-hat the Third, who earned the gratitude of his people and the proud title of "Storer of Water" by making a great reservoir called Lake Mœris, among the Libyan Hills, connected with the Nile by a canal. Hence the people suffered no longer from the excessive inundations or the lack of water, which they had hitherto looked upon as owing to the caprice of the gods.

Amen-em-hat was also the builder of the curious Labyrinth, an unusual kind of pyramid, containing three hundred rooms above ground and the same number below, all connected by winding passages. This, it is said, was originally built as a tomb for the sacred crocodiles.

This period was followed by one of invasion by a tribe of Eastern barbarians, who established a new dynasty, known as that of the Hyksôs, or Shepherd Kings. A singular spirit of restlessness at that time seems to have infected many of the tribes who inhabited the borders of Egypt, as well as the peoples of the other Eastern kingdoms which had now firmly established themselves in South-Western Asia.

These newcomers were probably a mixed horde of wanderers who had thought the borders of their own land or the pasturage ground of their flocks and



MAP OF ANCIENT EGYPT.

herds too narrow for them, and who found Egypt in her days of peace and commercial prosperity an easy conquest. The ancient historian says of them:—

“There came up from the east in strange manner men of an ignoble race, who had the confidence to invade our country and easily subdued it without a battle. And when they had our rulers in their hands they burnt our cities, demolished the temples of the gods, and inflicted every kind of barbarity upon the inhabitants, slaying some, and reducing the wives and children of others to a state of slavery.”

It is a singular fact that no inscription refers to this event. This silence, indeed, speaks most eloquently of the wave of barbarism which almost destroyed for a time the civilization of at least a part of Egypt. Yet the Hyksôs Sphinx to be seen in the British Museum shows a face of distinct power and intellect, and we may be fairly certain that during the latter part of their rule of five centuries the Hyksôs were themselves much influenced by the effect of that reviving civilization which they had tried to destroy.

It has been thought, with good reason, that Joseph, the son of Jacob, owed his advancement to the post of what we may call Prime Minister to one of these Hyksôs kings. For, as their name implies, the invaders were originally wanderers of the shepherd type, accustomed to drive their flocks from place to place, and so would be likely to welcome to the land a

similar tribe such as that of Jacob and his sons ; while the fact that to the Egyptian "every shepherd was an abomination," not only accounts for the bad times that fell to the lot of "Israel in Egypt," but shows the long-preserved tradition of hatred against their former conquerors.

The New Empire, which began about seventeen centuries before Christ, saw the downfall of the Hyksôs kings, and the beginning of the "Golden Age" for Egypt.

Under Thothmes the First, the men of the land marched forth in warlike array, and for the first time made it their aim to conquer outside territory, and thus to enlarge the borders of their land. This is described with the usual exaggeration and glowing colours of the fervid Eastern imagination :—

"Thotmes has taken tribute from the nations of the north, the south, and from those of the whole earth. He has laid hold of the barbarians ; he has not let a single one escape his grip upon their hair. He has made their waters to flow backward ; he has overflowed their valleys like a deluge, like waters that mount and mount. . . . *All the countries of the entire earth are prostrate under his feet.*"

If this is not a mere figure of speech, the limits of the known world were narrow indeed, for the utmost done by Thothmes was to march through Syria, the neighbouring country on the north-east,



cross the river Euphrates, and fight a series of fierce battles with the powers of Babylonia and Assyria.

His chief renown lies in the fact that he was the first to bring Egypt, by this means, into touch with the other nations of the world.

This was still further carried out by his daughter Hatasu, a queen of manly and independent character, whose personality and position remind us somewhat of our own Queen Elizabeth of England.

In days when it was most unusual for a woman to hold supreme authority of any kind, she took the whole of the work of government out of the hands of her young nephew, assumed the dress of a man and an artificial beard, and changed her title of the "Daughter of the Sun, consort of Amen, dwelling in his heart," to "Son of the god,—his Majesty herself."

Her ambition was to build a fleet of merchant ships, and to increase thereby her foreign commerce. Trade was opened with Punt, the "Land of Sheba," probably the district lying on either side of the Red Sea, famous for its gums and spices; and, as in the days of Solomon some six centuries later, a queen of Sheba returned with the fleet to visit her royal sister.

With the success of this expedition Hatasu was so pleased that she built a new temple to Amen, near Thebes, and caused illustrations of the whole event to be shown upon its walls. There you can see the ships, their crews, the foreigners with whom they



AN EGYPTIAN SCRIBE MAKING A LIST OF CATTLE BROUGHT BEFORE HIM.
(From a mural painting in the British Museum. Photo by Mansell.)

traded and their queen, the spice trees brought to Egypt, the homage paid by the strangers to Hatasu, and the offering of the incense brought by them to the Egyptian gods.

Meantime the queen's nephew, Thothmes the Third, had grown to manhood, and for the last few years of her reign was admitted by his masterful aunt to some slight share in the government. His subordinate position seems to have been deeply resented by the prince, for directly Hatasu died he had her name erased from nearly all the monuments, threw commercial transactions to the winds, and proceeded to win fame for himself as a conqueror.

In this he succeeded so far that at the end of his reign Egypt was recognized as the greatest military power of the known world. His expeditions are said to have extended even to the coasts of Greece and Southern Italy in days long before the empires of Greece and Rome had been heard of; and the armies of Palestine, the fierce Hittite and Philistine bands, fled before his face.

If we wish to know what this youthful conqueror was like, we can find his statue in the northern Egyptian Gallery of the British Museum. Another monument of his time is the huge obelisk originally placed before his temple, and called after a queen of much later time "Cleopatra's Needle." It stands, as all London boys and girls know, on the Thames Embankment.

The memory of his descendant, Amenhotep the Third, is kept green by two enormous statues, sixty feet high, each formed of one solid block of sandstone, known as the "Twin Colossi."

Of these the sculptor himself, who bore the same name as the king, says : " I immortalized the name of the king, and no one has done the like of me in my works. I executed two portrait statues of the king, astonishing for their breadth and height. They were cut in the splendid sandstone mountain on either side, the eastern and the western. I caused to be built eight ships whereon the statues were carried up the river ; they were placed in a sublime temple ; they will last as long as heaven. A joyful event was it when they were landed at Thebes and raised up in their place."

Many centuries later, when the Romans had conquered Egypt, a very curious fact was noticed about one of these statues. At certain seasons, very early in the morning, the figure was heard to give a long, low musical cry. Naturally this occasioned great interest, and gave rise to many superstitions, for it certainly seemed as though the long dead Pharaoh still spoke through the lips of his stone image. The reason of the phenomenon has never been ascertained ; but it has been thought that a great earthquake which took place two years before the first mention of the sound may have so affected the block or its founda-



tions, that at certain changes of temperature the weird voice was produced. Some two hundred years after the Romans discovered it the statue was restored, and from that time the "Vocal Memnon" has uttered no sound.

Chapter III.

THE FALL OF EGYPT.

(C. 1400–340 B.C.)

WE are now approaching the days when the glory of Egypt was beginning to grow dim.

Trouble and disunion in the empire began when King Amenhotep the Fourth changed his name to that of Khuenhaten, the "Glory of the Disc," and tried to force his people to transfer their worship from the "great god Amen" to Aten, the Disc or round shape of the sun. This god was looked upon as the giver of life, and his symbol was the light of the sun as seen in the shape of a fiery disc in the heavens.

Such a mighty quarrel soon arose between the Disc worshippers and the followers of Amen that the land was left unprotected, subject states revolted, and the nation rapidly fell into a state of weakness and decay. This was arrested for a while by the vigorous rule of Seti the First, a great builder-king. He it was who erected the Memnonium, a temple at Abydos, which

contains the famous "King List," beginning with Menes and ending with Seti himself. On the walls there you may see the figures of Seti and his son making offerings of incense, and praying that the god will give to each of the kings whose name appears a thousand cakes, a thousand cattle, a thousand fowls, a thousand vessels of ale, etc., etc.

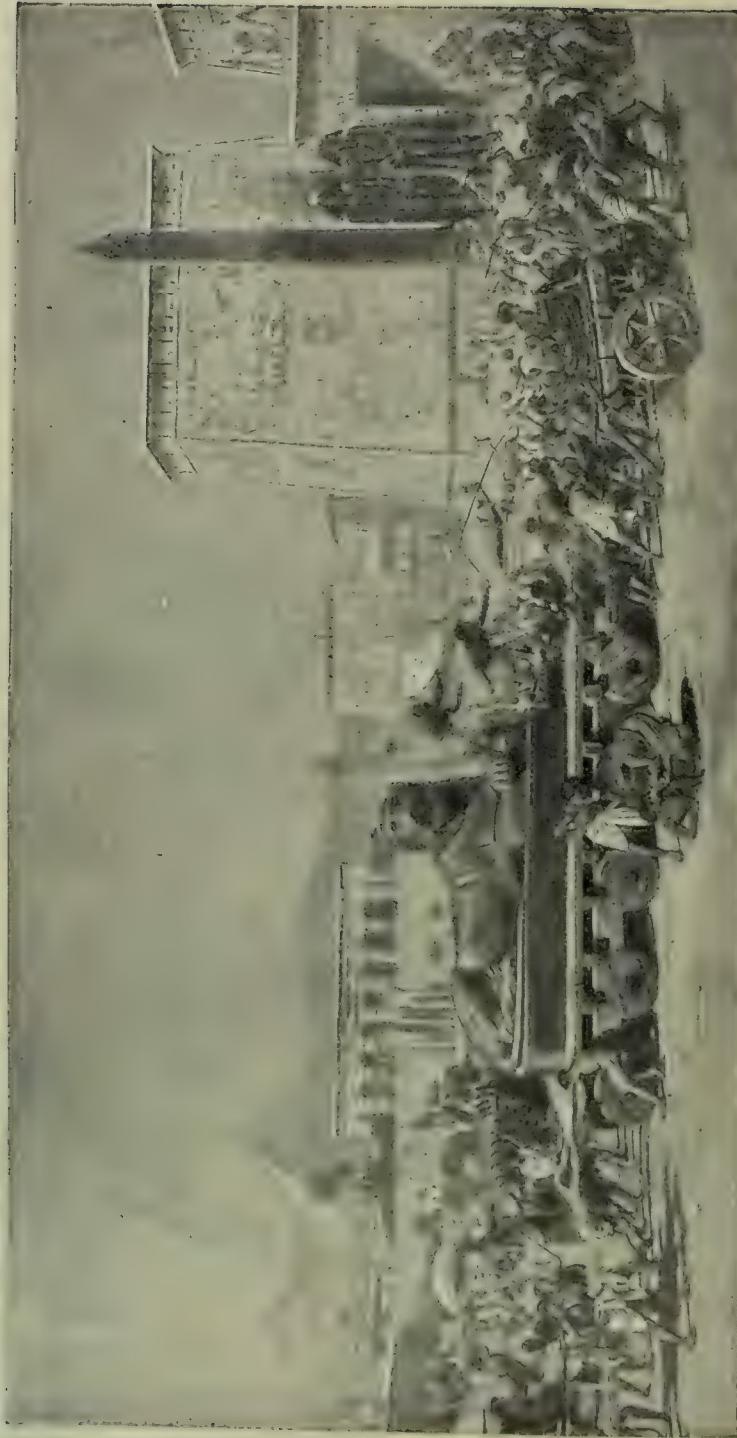
Seti, moreover, fully restored the tarnished glory of Egypt by his defeat of the revolting tribes on the border lands. Even the warlike Kheta (probably the Hittites), who figure so frequently upon the monuments, were subdued for a time, and the triumph of Seti was complete. "Pharaoh is a jackal," writes a poet of his day, "who rushes leaping through the Kheta land ; he is a grim lion exploring the hidden ways ; he is a powerful bull, with a pair of sharpened horns. He has struck down the Asiatics ; he has passed among them as a flame of fire ; he has brought them to nought."

Before his death Seti protected the land in some measure against invasion by building a great wall across the isthmus where now we find the Suez Canal. This was left to his son to complete, after he himself had been laid to rest in the handsome marble coffin-case to be seen nowadays in Sir John Soane's Museum in London.

His son, Rameses the Second, whose image may be found in the British Museum, opened a new



ISRAEL IN EGYPT.
(From the painting by Sir E. J. Poynter, P.R.A. By permission of J. C. Hawkhurst, Esq.)



series of conflicts with the Kheta, and describes his success in terms even more extravagant than the praises lavished on his father :—

“ I hurled the dart with my right hand, I fought with my left hand ; I was like Baal in my wrath. I had come upon two thousand five hundred pair of horses ; I was in the midst of them ; but they were dashed to pieces before my steeds. Not one of them raised his hand to fight ; their hearts shrank within them, their limbs gave way ; they could not hurl the dart, nor had they strength to thrust with the spear. As crocodiles fall into the water, so I made them fall ; they tumbled headlong over one another. I killed them at my pleasure, so that not one of them looked behind him, nor did any turn round. Each fell, and none raised himself up again.”

Over and over again we may find this conflict depicted upon the walls of Egypt. Perhaps it was enlarged upon because during the remainder of the reign the military glory of Egypt distinctly declined. But we are interested in this Rameses the Second for other reasons. It is very probable that he was that same Pharaoh who oppressed the Israelites, making their lives “ bitter in mortar and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field.” Possibly he feared the strength of the rapidly increasing people, and so determined to crush their spirit by forced labour of the harshest kind. They were used as beasts

of burden ; they were forced to drag his heavy war-chariots under the stinging lash ; hardest of all for a shepherd people, they were forced to build his great treasure-cities, Pithom and Rameses, which probably stood on that wall that Seti had begun in order to separate Egypt from Asia.

If we want to know more of the exploits of this Rameses the Second, we may find them depicted in the British Museum on a picture showing the king standing upright in his chariot, shooting arrows at an Ethiopian army in full retreat. (See p. 41.) Another shows him besieging a fortified Asiatic town, from the walls of which we see one woman flinging her child, while another throws herself prostrate in an attitude of despair.

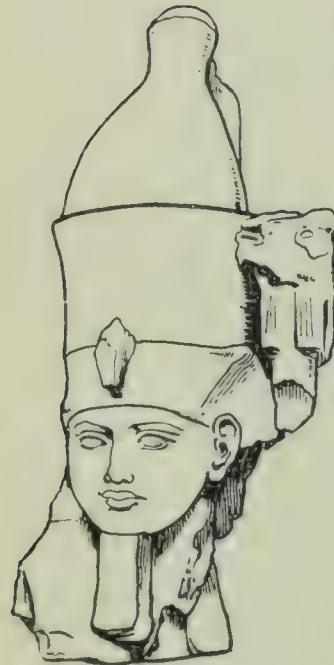
Let us turn from these to the statue of Rameses' successor, Menephthah the Second. He has a soft, almost girlish face, but his expression is vacant, his mouth weak and fretful. He was not the kind of Pharaoh to govern Egypt at a critical time. When he had reigned five years, a number of nations, including, it is believed, some of the tribes dwelling on the European side of the Mediterranean, invaded the land, bringing with them, besides their swords of bronze and their bows and arrows, thrones for their chieftains and tents of skin for their wives and little ones, evidently with the intention of settling in the country. "The like had not been seen," says the Egyptian historian



The Destruction of the Egyptians at the Red Sea.

(From a drawing by H. M. Paget.)

of this time, "even in the times of the kings of Egypt when the Plague was in the land, and the kings (that is, the Hyksôs monarchs) were unable to drive it out."



Now when Menephthah, safe within the walls of Memphis, heard that city after city had fallen before the invaders, he "roared like a lion," says the historian, and collected a large army wherewith to proceed against them. When all was ready, he made his soldiers a fine speech, reminding them that he was their king and responsible for their safety; but just before the time came for him to lead them forth he sent out a proclamation announcing that the god Ptah, his special protector, had appeared to him, and standing so as to prevent his advance had said, "Stay where thou art, and let thy troops proceed against the enemy alone."

In spite of the loss of their royal leader, his generals managed to drive the invaders forth after a desperate conflict. The leader of the foreign host was obliged to flee for his life, flinging away his bow and sandals as he went; and finally had to cast away even his clothes, and escape almost naked to the wilderness in order that he should not be known. But when the Egyptian generals returned in triumph, it was to find the king taking to himself the whole credit of the affair.

"The Libyans were thinking to do evil in Egypt," he announced. "They were as grasshoppers; every

road was blocked by their hosts. Then I vowed to lead them captive; lo! I vanquished them, and slaughtered them, making a spoil of their country."

It was probably in the reign of this sham hero that the "exodus" of the children of Israel took place. It is evident that he knew the value of these clever, submissive, hard-working people, and that this was the reason of his refusal to listen to the demands of Moses. The character we may form of him from a study of his statue and pictures is well borne out by what we read in the Bible account of his inconsistency and changeableness. No doubt it was superstitious dread which made him at length wish to hurry the Israelites from the land in which he had been so anxious to retain them, and the weakness of his nature which made him determine to recall them directly they had actually set out.

No mention is made on the monuments of the destruction of the flower of his army under the waters of Lake Timsah, the "Red Sea" of the Bible, by the strong returning flow of the tide; but considering the disgrace that the whole incident reflects upon Egypt, such an account could scarcely be looked for.

A period of rapid decay followed the death of this Pharaoh, and this was barely checked by the exploits of the third Rameses, who managed for a time to keep back the invaders from the borders of the land. Amongst many pictures of this king's period we find

one showing a great sea-fight, supposed to have been with the combined fleets of the Mediterranean pirates —the earliest naval engagement ever portrayed.

A welcome touch of human nature appears in the description of the last days of Rameses the Third, which he is said to have spent in planting trees and shrubs over the whole land of Egypt, "in order to give the inhabitants rest under their cool shade."



During this period of weakness in Egypt the countries which had once been subject to her sway were rapidly growing in importance. The first Babylonian Empire, as we shall shortly see, had already risen to its highest point and fallen away to nothing. Assyria had reached its first height of power, and was beginning to decline, though only for a time. The insignificant kingdom of Israel and Judah, under David's wise rule, had expanded into a territory which covered the country between Egypt and the river Euphrates, and had become an important power in Western Asia. Solomon, King David's successor, carried on a flourishing trade with Egypt, and was married to the daughter of one of the "Priest Kings" of that country who had usurped the throne of the later Rameses. Hence we are not surprised to find that Solomon's great Temple at Jerusalem shows many clear evidences of the influence of Egyptian architecture.



CONQUESTS OF RAMSES II. OVER THE ETHIOPIANS.

(From a mural painting in the British Museum. Photo by Mansell.)

1. A Nubian village (to left of the picture).
2. Ramesses overcoming the Nubians (in centre).
3. Princes in their chariots (to right of the picture).

(See also page 49.)

But a change soon came over these friendly relations.

When Jeroboam rebelled against King Solomon, it was to Shishak, king of Egypt, that he turned for sympathy and support. Shishak forthwith encouraged him to set himself up as king in opposition to Rehoboam, son of Solomon, and then acted as the king of a powerful state has so often done with respect to a small and divided nation. He came down upon Jerusalem with all his forces, spoiled the Temple, and only allowed Rehoboam to exist as the "servant" of Egypt, forced to pay him fealty and tribute.

So pleased was Shishak with his success on this occasion that he had the story of the expedition portrayed upon the wall of that storehouse of history, the Temple of Karnak. There we may find the king holding thirty captives at once by the hair of their heads, and threatening them with his club. He appears again as the conqueror of one hundred and thirty-three cities, each mentioned by name, and showing that in his days Egypt had reassumed her sway over Syria to a large extent.

But this state of things did not last for very long. With his "mighty men of valour," Asa, grandson of Rehoboam, fought his way back to independence, "smiting the host of Egypt with great slaughter." For the next three centuries Egypt was glad to lean upon Israel and Judah in alliance against the greater powers of the East. The glory of the once mighty empire

was now a thing of the past; and in terror of the approaching invasion of Assyria, Egypt was forced to yield herself to the protection of an Ethiopian chief-tain, who was soon the acknowledged ruler of the country.

These Ethiopian monarchs were apparently able for a while to maintain friendly arrangements with the dreaded Assyrian power, for we find in the British Museum a lump of clay to which the kings of the two countries respectively affixed their seals. On that of Egypt, the king, Shabak by name, is called "The beautiful god, the lord, maker of things," and is shown in the act of striking down his enemies with a club.

Concerning this same Shabak, a curious story has come down to us. He had a dream that the god of Thebes came to him with the information that his reign would shortly come to a violent end unless he proceeded to cut to pieces all the priests of the land. This dream occurred again and again, so that at last he summoned the priests from every temple, and told them that if he remained longer in Egypt he must either displease the god or make an end of all the priests in the country. So he proceeded to give up the kingdom altogether, and returned to Ethiopia. It was probably Shabataka, his successor, who joined Hezekiah, king of Judah, in the great revolt of the lesser countries against Sennacherib, king of Assyria. For a short period this revolt met with success, owing



to the destruction of the conqueror's forces, probably by plague. But Egypt's triumph was brief indeed.

Under Sennacherib's successors the whole land was sacked, and for a while lay desolate under the heel of Assyria. Then a curious revival took place, owing largely to the intercourse established with a new and vigorous race.

In the early stages of Greek civilization, known as the "Mycenæan Age," it is certain that Greece and Egypt had maintained friendly relations, for we find upon the Egyptian walls pictures of Greek soldiers who had served in the Egyptian army, while Egyptian pottery and decorations figure largely among the relics of Ancient Greece. This, however, belongs to the age of Seti and of the early Rameses in Egypt, and to the age of Homer in early Greece.

Now, however, just as the Egyptian Empire was on the verge of destruction, it once more joined hands with Greece, and thus maintained for a while an outward appearance of prosperity. Greek merchants settled down in Egypt, Greek soldiers fought in the Egyptian army, Greek art and religion began to influence the traditions of thirty centuries of Egyptian culture. Fleets were built with the aid of Greek workmanship, and a great "world market" was set up.

But all this, in reality, only prepared the way for the changes that were so near. Scarcely three years after Necho, king of Egypt, had defeated and slain



HELEN ON THE WALLS OF TROY.
(From the painting by Sir F. Leighton, P.R.A.)

Josiah, the king of Judah, the armies of Nebuchadnezzar, the great king of Babylon, swept westward and expelled the Egyptians from Syria. Next year the blow fell upon Egypt herself. Her king was killed by Amasis, his own general, and the latter was allowed to rule only as a tributary prince of Babylonia.

Meantime the power of Persia had arisen, almost suddenly, among the kingdoms of Asia, under Cyrus, of whom we shall hear much later on. An old Greek historian who loves a romantic story gives this reason for the outbreak of Persia's wrath against Egypt. Cyrus, king of Persia, had fallen sick with a disease of the eyes, and hearing that Egypt was famous for its learned physicians, sent to Amasis a request that he should dispatch to him at once the best oculist in the land.

This Amasis did ; but the doctor, full of anger at being thus sent from his home and family, tried to revenge himself upon the Egyptian king by continually praising the beauty of the daughter of Amasis in such terms that Cyrus was persuaded to order her father to send the girl to him to serve in his household.

Now Amasis was heartbroken at this command, for he could not bear to part with his daughter. He remembered that the daughter of the late king, his master, was tall and fair, so he took her and dressed her in fine robes, and sent her to Persia as though she had been his own beloved child.

But the young princess betrayed him to Cyrus, telling, besides, how Amasis had killed the king, his master, and had stirred up the people to revolt against the royal house. And so it came about that Cyrus of Persia left as a solemn charge to Cambyses the duty of overthrowing the empire of which this traitor was the head.

One battle decided the fate of the country in the days of Amasis' successor. Memphis was taken, and the king was made to sit at the entrance of the city while his daughter and other high-born Egyptian ladies were forced to dress as slaves and fetch water from the river, in token of their humiliation before their conqueror. The girls uttered loud cries of wrath and misery, but the Egyptian monarch sat with his eyes bent upon the ground in perfect silence.

Then Cambyses, in order to torture him further, selected two thousand noble Egyptian youths, including the fallen monarch's own son, and made them pass before the king on their way to death with halters round their necks. But still the king remained silent and gave no sign.

Soon there chanced to pass by an old man, once a friend of the king, but now reduced to beg his daily bread. And when the king perceived him he burst into tears, and smote upon his head, and called on him by name.

Upon this Cambyses, wondering greatly, inquired why he, who appeared to care nothing for the slavery



of his daughter or the death of his son, should weep at the sight of an old beggar. To which the king replied, "Son of Cyrus, the calamities of my family are too great to be expressed by lamentation ; but the griefs of my friend are worthy of tears, seeing that he has come to beggary in his old age."

These pathetic words seemed to touch the hard heart of Cambyses, and for a time the king was left in peace. Not for long, however ; for when he made an attempt to reassume his old position, he was forced to "drink the blood of the bull," in which cup lurked a dose of deadly poison.

Thereupon Cambyses proceeded to "break the yokes of Egypt, and make the pride of her power to cease" in the most ruthless fashion. He insulted the national religion in every possible way, reviling the gods, and stabbing with his own dagger the sacred bull of Apis. Driven to desperation, the people only awaited the message that brought the news of the defeat of Darius, the next king of Persia, by the onslaught of the Greeks at Marathon, to rebel against him themselves.

At first their revolts came to nothing. Then a wise and able prince named Nectanebo made a determined stand against the Persian and Greek allies who were invading the land. Delay was caused by a quarrel between the two leaders of the advancing host, and this was increased by a sudden and unusually high overflow of the Nile. Roads were destroyed, and the



Ramesses seated upon his throne receiving tribute from the Nubians, consisting of gold, leopard skins, apes, panthers, giraffes, oxen, gazelles, lions, ostriches, antelopes, ivory, etc.



invading armies threatened by the oncoming waters. In haste and confusion the allies retreated to Asia and gave up the expedition, leaving Nectanebo free to rule the land for a brief space in peace and freedom. Two fine obelisks of black granite, to be found in the British Museum, stand as witnesses of this king's encouragement of the arts of peace. But his reign was quickly followed by a time of terror and confusion.

The Persian king, with an overwhelming host of Greeks and Asiatics, marched upon the land. The last of the Pharaohs of the first great empire of the world fled to the desert, and Egypt became a mere province of the Persian dominions.

But though an empire may crumble to the dust, it leaves behind it a legacy for future generations, living under circumstances widely differing, to take and use for their own purposes.

“Everything must have a beginning,” says one proverb. “Beginnings are difficult,” says another, well known to the boys and girls of Ancient Greece. Now, since Egypt is, as far as we know, one of the oldest—if not the very oldest—of the empires of the world, it must have been within her borders that the usages of civilization first began. Side by side with her grew up the still more wonderful civilization of the countries in the Euphrates valley. A historian sums up the whole matter as follows:—

“From the valleys of the Tigris, Euphrates, and the

Nile, civilization passed through the regions of the Eastern Mediterranean and Asia Minor to Greece ; Greece received and improved upon the Eastern civilization, and taught Rome the secrets of her power and progress ; Rome, her native vigour refined and guided by Greek civilization, became the mistress of the world, the source of order and progress to a wider circle of peoples gathered under her sway."

And since Rome came into close touch with Western Europe, and was the first civilizing power of France and Britain, we have here a distinct series of links between ourselves and this far-off people of the land of Ancient Egypt.

Chapter IV.

ANCIENT BABYLONIA.

(C. 3800-1200 B.C.)

WHETHER Egypt or Ancient Babylon holds the strongest claim to the title of "Mother of Empires" matters little. If we consider the matter merely from the point of which civilization first existed, Babylon probably has the advantage, for it has been thought, with reason, that the most ancient race existing in the Nile valley learnt the higher arts of

civilization from the host of Babylonian emigrants who settled in their land.

If, on the other hand, we think rather of the influence exerted upon other nations, as well as of the length of existence as an empire, we must give the title to Egypt.

Nowadays a wilderness of sand, dotted with a number of mounds, and resembling a gigantic cemetery, is all that remains of the once famous empire of Babylonia. Well has the region been called a "Graveyard of Empires and Nations," for under those mounds lie buried such famous cities as those of Ur and Nineveh and Babylon, together with the bones of mighty men—

"Who from days of old ruled the earth,
To whom the gods Anu and Bel have given name of rule."

Among the many famous discoveries made in this region during the last fifty years has been that of two small rooms, the floors of which were closely packed with fragments of clay tablets covered with the wedge-shaped letters known as "cuneiform."

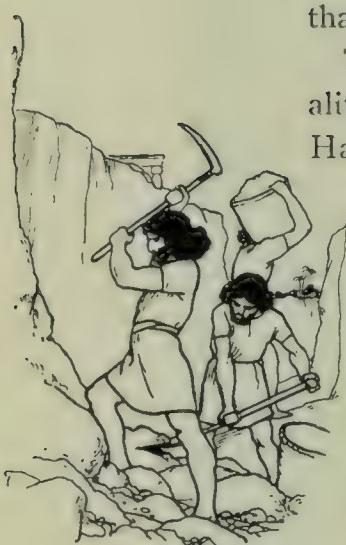
It was evident that these tablets, in an unbroken state, had once been ranged in orderly layers round the walls, and that in the process of time and destruction they had been thrown to the ground and shattered.

The place is, in fact, a complete "library," the most ancient in the world, and the broken tablets are the



AN ASSYRIAN MONARCH IN THE HUNTING FIELD.
(From a slab in the British Museum. Photo by Mansell.)

"books" of which it was composed. It is from these fragments, pieced together and deciphered by scholars, that we learn much of the story of the land.



The founder of the empire was a striking personality, alike as king, warrior, and statesman, named Hammurabi. His first thought was for the welfare of his country, of which an early inscription makes him say : "When the great gods Anu and Bel gave me the land of Babylonia to rule, and entrusted their sceptre to my hands, I dug out the Hammurabi canal, nourisher of men, which brings abundance of water to the Babylonian lands. Both its banks I changed into fields for cultivation ; and I gathered heaps of grain, and procured unfailing water for the Babylonian lands."

Such a gift as a perpetual water supply was, as we have seen in the case of Egypt, the swiftest way to the hearts of a people who lived in daily fear of the drought which brought death and disaster to their homes.

The famous code of this king, discovered, in the year 1901, on a great block of diorite under one of the mounds, sheds a flood of light upon the civilization of Babylonia in his days. It makes mention of a regular postal system, of a flourishing state of commerce, and of a highly organized religion. But especially it shows us a criminal law system, so perfect that it has been thought to have been the foundation

of that "Roman Law" for which Rome was so justly famous in later days. If this be so, we have another clear chain of sequence between one of the most ancient of empires and our own, since our system of laws is, to a large extent, based on that of Rome.

The following example clearly finds its echo in the Hebrew doctrine of "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth," a principle that is to be found in all early civilizations :—

"If a son strike his father, they shall cut off his fingers. If a man destroy the eye of another man, they shall destroy his eye. If one breaks a man's bone, they shall break his bone."

Here are one or two more of these interesting laws :—

"If a man strike another man in a quarrel and wound him, he shall swear, 'I struck him without intent (?) to kill,' and he shall be responsible for a physician."

"If a fire break out in the house of a man, and a man who goes to extinguish it cast his eye on the furniture of the owner of the house, and take the furniture, that man shall be thrown into the fire."

"If a man bring an accusation against a man, and charge him with a crime, but cannot prove it, he, the accuser, shall be put to death."

The code ends with these words :—

"Let any oppressed man who has a cause come



In the Early Days A Scene from the Shepherd Life of the East.
(From the painting by R. Payton Reid, A.R.S.A.)

before my image as king of righteousness. Let him read the inscription on my monument. Let him give heed to my mighty words. And may my monument enlighten him as to his cause, and may he understand his case. May he set his heart at ease. Then will he exclaim, ‘ Hammurabi is indeed a ruler who is like a real father to his people.’ ”

Another important action taken by this king was the collection and preservation of records of the religious beliefs of his country from the earliest times. Some of these are very curious and interesting, and tell us much of the character of the Babylonian people.

They believed the earth to be of the shape of an inverted bowl, the outer part of which represented land and water, the inner a deep, dark pit, the abode of spirits. Above the earth rose to the sky a very high mountain.

Below this, though still above the earth, seven planets, kindly disposed to mortal men, wandered round the universe, in conflict with seven demons known as the Fiery Phantoms.

Above them all reigned Anu and Bel, the gods of the sky. In the ocean dwelt Ea, the spirit of earth in shape of a fish, who travelled round the world as its protector. Deep in the abyss lived the Maskim, seven evil spirits who “enjoy a good name neither in heaven nor on earth,” and who were regarded as the

cause of storms, earthquakes, and whirlwinds. They are thus described in a book of the period : " Seven they are in the depths of the ocean ; seven they are, disturbers of the face of heaven. They arise from the depths of ocean, from hidden lurking-places. They spread like snares. Male they are not ; female they are not ; wives they have not ; children are not born to them. Order they know not, nor beneficence. Vermin grown in the depths of the mountains, foes of Ea, they sit in the roads and make them unsafe. The fiends ! the fiends ! They are seven ! "

In that dark abyss lurked also the demons of Pestilence, Fever, Insanity, and all that countless host which brought ill-luck and misfortune to the house. Here also dwelt the dead in the " Great Land "—the " spacious dwelling where they wander in darkness ; " for the Babylonians held a far more gloomy view of death than did the Egyptians.

Like all Eastern nations, they were great believers in sorcery and magic. If a man fell ill, he was supposed to be under the spell of an evil spirit. This his friends would try to counteract by peeling an onion, in the belief that as the layers of skin were in turn burnt up by the fire, so the spell would gradually vanish away. As they did this they would utter the prayer, " May they all be destroyed as this onion, and may the burning fire consume them this day."

They also firmly believed in the good that would

follow from a remedy suggested by some chance passenger in the street as he passed by the doorway in which the sick man was exposed to the public gaze.

In the British Museum we can see many examples of winged bulls of all sizes. These were the talismans used by the Babylonians, and handed on by them to the Assyrians, as guardian spirits to be set on the threshold to keep evil from the house.

Says a monarch of his palace in Babylon : " I placed in its gates bulls.....which, according to their fixed commands, turn themselves against the wicked ; they protect the footsteps, making peace to be upon the path of the king, their creator."

As a protection against the scorching breath of the south-west wind, an image of the demon which was supposed to be its cause and representation was set up at the door or window. One of these may be found in the Louvre, in Paris. It shows a horrid fiend, with the body of a dog, the claws of an eagle upon the paws of a lion, a scorpion's tail, the head of a skeleton, and the horns of a goat.

We have now had a glimpse of Ancient Babylonia in the comparatively modern and civilized days of Hammurabi.

The original inhabitants of Babylonia were probably shepherds, who knew, however, how to make canals, use metals, and construct houses of brick.

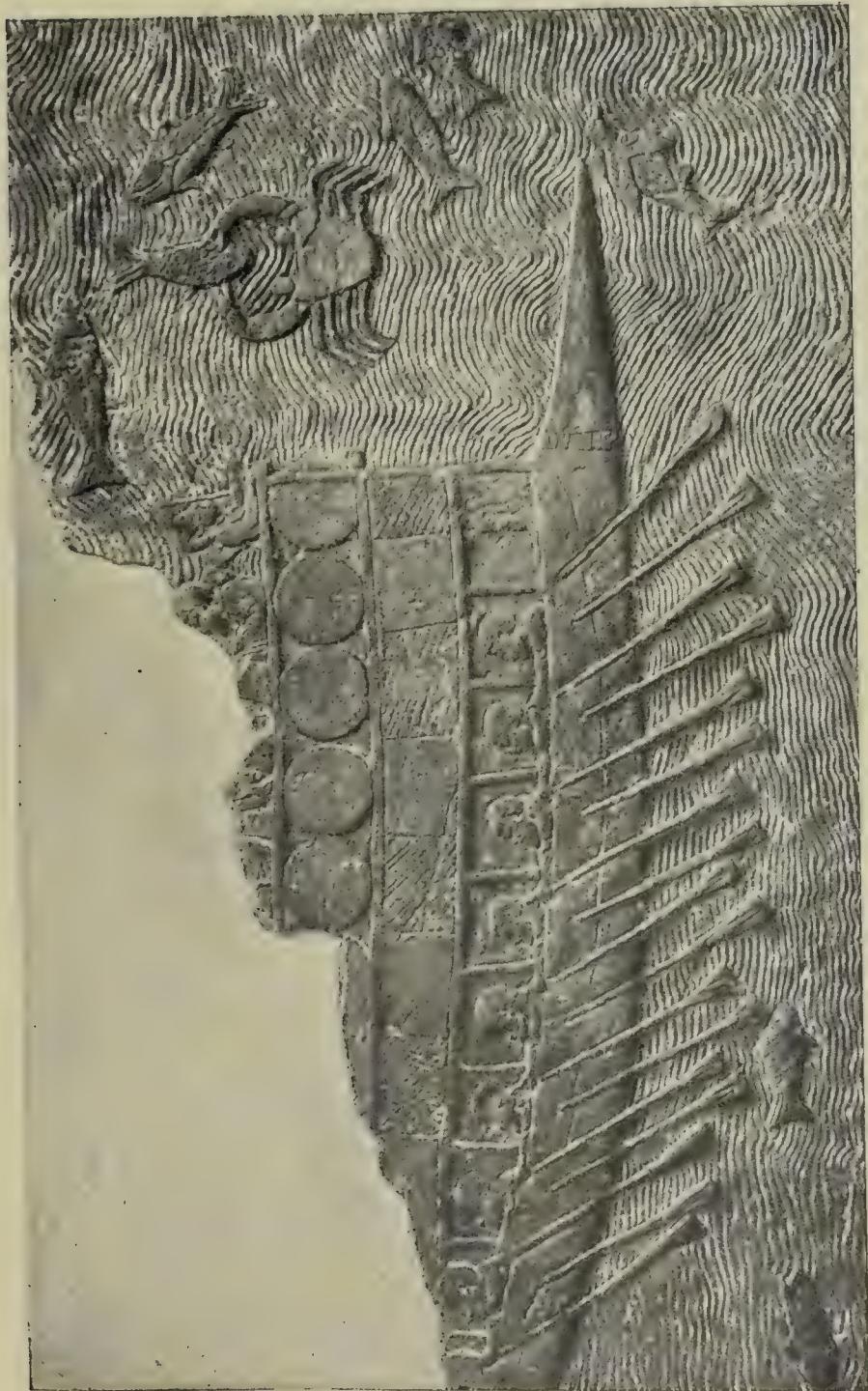


The story of the coming of the new and more advanced civilization is thus told in the "Annals" or history books of the nation, under the form of a legend :—"There was at Babylon a multitude of men of foreign race who lived without order, like animals. But there appeared out of the Red Sea, where it borders on Babylonia, an animal endowed with reason, who was called Oannes. The whole body of the animal was that of a fish, but under the fish's head he had another head, and also feet below, growing out of his fish's tail, similar to those of a man ; also human speech ; and his image is preserved to this day. This being used to spend the whole day among men, without taking any food, and he gave them an insight into letters and sciences, and every kind of art.

"He taught them how to found cities, to construct temples, to introduce laws, and to measure land ; he showed them how to sow seeds and gather in crops : in short, he instructed them in everything that softens manners and makes up civilization, so that from that time no one has invented anything new.

"Then, when the sun went down, this monstrous Oannes used to plunge back into the sea and spend the night in the midst of the boundless waves, for he could live as well in water as on land."

The earliest chieftain who emerges into history from the twilight period of this new civilization, about fifty-seven centuries ago, is Sargon the First. Romance



AN ARMED GALLEY IN MOTION.

(From a marble slab from Nineveh of the seventh century B.C., now in the British Museum. Photo by Mansell.)



was about him from his cradle. After his birth, in a hidden place near the Euphrates River, his mother placed him in an ark of rushes, and closed the door thereof with pitch. "She launched me on the river, which drowned me not. The river bore me along ; to Akki the water-carrier it brought me. Akki the water-carrier, in the tenderness of his heart, lifted me up. Akki the water-carrier brought me up as his own child. Akki the water-carrier made me his gardener ; and in my gardenership the goddess Ishtar loved me."

So, under favour of the goddess, he became king, and in due time went forth to conquer in other lands.

"For forty-five years," he says in an inscription, which may, however, refer to a later king of the same name, "the kingdom have I ruled, and the black-headed race have I governed. In multitudes of bronze chariots I rode over rugged lands. I governed the upper countries. Three times I advanced to the coast of the (Persian) sea."

Some sixteen centuries later, when the city of Ur had become a great trading centre in the land of Chaldaea or Babylonia, the inhabitants were much troubled by the invasion of their fierce neighbours the Elamites, who ravaged the fair Euphrates valley from end to end. One of these Elamite kings was possibly the Chedor-laomer of whom we read in the Book of Genesis ; and

it was very likely the restlessness caused by this state of things that suggested to Abraham and Terah to leave their native city, "Ur of the Chaldees," and seek, with their tribe, a more peaceful settlement in the land of Canaan.

It was the dispersal of the Elamites by Hammurabi some time later which left this monarch free to found a great empire in Babylonia, as we have already seen.

So firmly laid were the foundations of this early empire that even when the land was overrun by a new enemy, the wild Kassites from the mountain regions, it stood firm, and the newcomers were glad to accept its civilization, and rule according to its customs.

During their time the Babylonians were famous for their world-trade, for we find that when they were building a temple, they were able to contribute to it cedar and cypress wood and marble from the "mountains of the East," lapis lazuli from far-off Bactria—the modern Afghanistan region—magnesite from the Greek islands of the *Æ*gean Sea, cobalt from China, as well as copper, gold, and precious stones from other countries.

Two letters are to be seen in the British Museum from kings of this Kassite dynasty to the reigning Pharaoh of Egypt. One speaks of a period of prosperity and peace within the land; the other gently

chides the Egyptian ruler for not having sent on ambassadors to inquire after him when he was ill.

Meantime the tributary city of Assur, on the river Tigris, had thrown off the yoke of Babylon when the Kassites had first invaded the country, and within a comparatively few centuries had become the centre of a great nation.

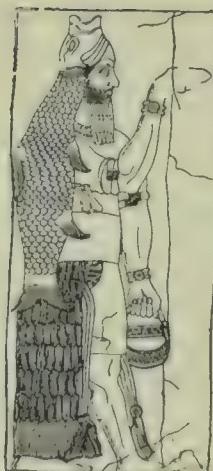
The mother country of Babylonia was one of the earliest conquests of the new Empire of Assyria under the rule of Tiglath-Pileser. Yet, in her position of dependence, Babylonia succeeded in profoundly influencing the warrior-nation who had become her nominal conqueror; and in the years to come her spirit of culture and quiet strength was to cause her to stand forth once again as the Second Empire of Babylonia.

Chapter V.

THE ASSYRIAN EMPIRE.

(C. 1830-539 B.C.)

WE saw in our last chapter that Assyria, the land lying on either side of the river Tigris, north of the plain between the two great waters of the Tigris and Euphrates, was a colony of Ancient Babylonia. Assur and Nineveh were two of its greatest cities, and the first of these gave the nation its name.



Nineveh is a real treasure-house of ancient history. In it was found a famous library full of the "hollow cylinders" made of very thin terra-cotta, which were the books of that period, and from which we learn what were the chief acts of the monarchs of the land.

More interesting still are the statues and wall-pictures which paint the religion, life, and customs of the people. They were evidently a large-limbed, robust race—a "fierce people," as the Hebrew Scriptures call them—fond of hunting, fonder still of fighting their foes. Their features are well-marked, with hooked noses and keen eyes ; and written on their faces may be seen the evidence of great business capability, as well as of the pride and treachery which were the national characteristics.

"Woe to thee that spoilest, and thou wast not spoiled ; and dealest treacherously, and they dealt not treacherously with thee," says the Bible concerning them. It is rather their success as warriors and in conquering the dominions of their neighbours that has earned for them the title of the "Romans of the East."

The religion of this people was borrowed, as we should expect, very largely from the mother country. The Sun-god, Bel, or Baal as he is called in the Bible, was a fierce, mighty power, as was natural enough in that land of blazing sunshine. The fair Babylonian Istar, the "Star of Evening," became Astarte, the

“Moon-goddess,” worshipped with horrible and cruel rites. With the Assyrians was developed more fully the beautiful myth which told how the god-youth Tammuz, the “Autumn Sun,” is married to Astarte, but is slain on the mountains by the Boar’s tusk (Winter), and descends to the underworld. His sorrowing bride follows him thither, buying her right of entry at each of the seven gates with her most precious jewels. At length she reaches the throne of the god who rules these regions of darkness, and by him she is thrown into prison when she pleads for her husband’s return.

But the gods, weary for the beautiful Astarte, send to the under-world a great dog, whose name means the “Renewal of Dawn,” and by him she is carried back to the world of light. Presently, when Spring comes, the fair youth Tammuz is released, and returns to earth as the Sun-god Adonis.

Thousands of women celebrate his return throughout the streets, crying “Adonis lives!” and showing their boxes of earth full of springing plants to greet the awakened god.

Besides this myth, which clearly arose from a wish to account for the monthly course of the moon and the coming of the different seasons of the year, we hear of the god Nebo and the goddess Pasmit, who “enlightened the eyes” to read writing, and “enlarged the ears” to understand it.



IMAGE OF THE SUN-GOD.

Stone Tablet recording the Restoration of the Temple of the Sun-God at Sippara, by Nabu-pal-iddina, about 900 B.C.

Amongst a people whose chief occupation was fighting, the habits of the poorer people, at all events, were very simple. A small, flat-roofed house, furnished with a few low stools, a table, a mattress, and a long-necked earthenware jug, pointed at the bottom, formed their little home.

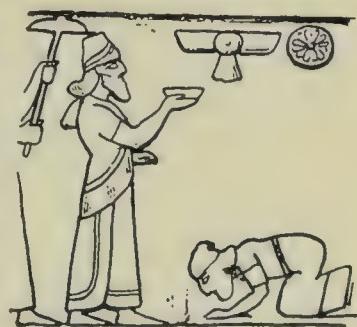
The nobles lived in a fashion rather more elaborate. Their dishes were of bronze and alabaster. They decked their tables with flowers, and were the first to invent the idea of the "hanging gardens" for which Babylon, in the days of her Second Empire, became so famous in after years. These gardens were raised on pillars, one above the other, and so arranged as to look in the distance like a huge flowering pyramid.

The nobles sat at their banquets on very high stools, at separate tables, four at each, with their feet dangling in the air. They wore long gowns decorated with many tassels, fringed belts and sandals, and usually had bracelets and thick armlets. Only officials, such as priests or musicians, wore a kind of hat, though soldiers sometimes wore skull-caps. Ordinary men wore only their hair, brushed back and arranged in rows of stiff curls, which protected them from sun or rain.

When the king rode to battle in his chariot he was accompanied by an umbrella-bearer and a charioteer, and was followed by a bow-bearer and a groom with

led horses in case of speedy flight becoming necessary. A royal chair or throne was also carried about with him from place to place. In the British Museum we find a sculptured wall-picture showing King Sennacherib sitting upon this chair in front of a captured city. Beneath it are these words: "Sennacherib, the king of legions, the king of Assyria, sat on an upright throne, and the spoil of the city passed before him." This was but a mild way of putting what really happened. When a city was sacked the little ones of the place were burned alive, the path of the conqueror was bordered with piles of human heads, and the city gates were decorated with stakes upon which the bodies of the conquered were impaled.

To the most glorious period of the first Assyrian Empire belongs the story of Shalmaneser the Second, who succeeded to the vast conquests of his father in Babylonia, Phoenicia, and all Mesopotamia. In the British Museum we find a black obelisk, on which it is recorded that tribute was brought to Shalmaneser by five nations, of which one, represented by Jehu, king of Israel, is lying prostrate at the feet of the conqueror. Another monument shows the seated figure of this king. A third consists of two great doors of brass, showing, in hammered relief, all the cities captured by him in his campaigns. We learn, too, from the Hebrew Book of the Kings that the rulers of Syria and Damascus joined with Ahab



of Israel in a vain attempt to throw off his power, and that Babylon revolted against him in an equally futile manner. Shalmaneser, indeed, seems to have gone out regularly to battle every year, just as naturally as people nowadays go to the mountains or the sea-coast for a holiday.

After his death the glory of Assyria declined for about fifty years, and then began to rise again under a great empire-builder, named Tiglath-Pileser the Third, about the middle of the eighth century before Christ. We may just stop here to notice that when this man, the real creator of the Assyrian Empire, began to reign, Egypt was beginning to decline, Greece was fast developing, and the walls of Rome were just beginning to rise.

Tiglath-Pileser was the first Assyrian king to realize that in order to hold his conquests he must bring each conquered nation into close touch with and in subjection to Assyria herself. This he managed by banishing those who would not submit to a distant corner of the empire, where they had to work out a living for themselves among strangers. The rest were forced to pay a yearly tax, and to regulate their trade according to the king's demands. Otherwise they were left fairly free.

He had also a great idea of welding together the various populations of the conquered cities with the Assyrians, so that they might literally form one

people. In the sculptures of this period we often find numbers of women, children, and household goods being carried on asses or in chariots, followed by a few men driving their flocks and herds, the whole cavalcade being guarded by Assyrian soldiers, who are evidently leading them into the Assyrian land in order that they might intermarry with their conquerors, and bring up children of a mixed race.



Under a later king, Sargon by name, the empire so nobly planned by Tiglath-Pileser was reorganized and strengthened throughout. It was he who not only crushed the Syrians but managed, by seizing Kar-kemish, the ancient capital of the Hittites, and the centre of the caravan trade between Eastern and Western Asia, to make his people the chief trading nation of the world. It was this Sargon whose seal, in the British Museum, set to a letter of friendly intercourse, shows the good terms upon which he stood with Shabak, king of Egypt.

In the meanwhile, however, Merodach, the subject-king of Babylonia, seized an early opportunity to revolt against Sargon, and managed to win over to his side Hezekiah, king of Judah.

Now Hezekiah, by the advice of Isaiah the prophet, his chief counsellor, had hitherto left the more revolutionary rulers of the neighbouring countries entirely alone; but on this occasion he threw prudence to the

winds, and not only received the ambassadors from Merodach, but "showed them all the house of his precious things, the silver, and the gold, and the spices, and the precious oil, and the house of his armour, and all that was found in his treasures: there was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion, that Hezekiah showed them not."

When Isaiah heard of this, a terrible condemnation fell upon the king for his rash act. "Behold, all that is in thy house shall be carried to Babylon..... Even the king's sons shall become servants in the palace of the king."

In later days this prophecy was amply fulfilled. But at first it seemed as though it was on Babylon alone that the curse was to fall. Judah, indeed, was crushed, and Jerusalem captured; but at the rumour of the approach of Sargon the heart of the king of Babylon failed him altogether. He fled "in the night-time like an owl," and making his way to the king of Elam, offered him his throne, his sceptre, and his umbrella—"of pure silver of considerable weight"—if he would help him.

The king of Elam knew better than to risk a contest with the warrior hosts of Assyria, and the unhappy Merodach was forced to hide himself among the marshes which surrounded one of his distant towns.

Seeing that he had thus basely deserted his post, the Babylonian officials promptly sought out Sargon,



Solomon at the Dedication of the Hebrew Temple at Jerusalem.
(From the painting by W. E. Gladstone Solomon.)

laid at his feet the images of the gods who were believed to protect the city, and bade him take possession of the latter.

In this way Assyria, the daughter nation, became ruler of the mother country of Babylonia.

And now Sargon the victorious warrior becomes Sargon the master-builder, devoting the rest of his life to the completion of his wonderful name-city, Dur-Sargon. "Day and night I planned to build that city," he says, "to erect dwellings for the great gods and palaces, the dwelling of my royalty. I gave the order to begin the work; I paid the price for the land of the city; and in order to do no wrong, I gave to those who did not wish to take money for their land, field for field, wherever they chose."

Most magnificent was that city of Sargon. It had eight gates guarded by such huge-winged bulls as can be seen to-day in the British Museum; and the palace, built "of ivory, of the wood of the palm, the cedar, the cypress," had bronze doors and a noble vestibule.

"May Assur bless this city and this palace!" prays the royal builder. "May he invest these constructions with an eternal brightness! May he grant that they shall be inhabited unto the remotest days! May the sculptured bull, the guardian spirit, stand for ever before his face! May he keep watch here night

and day, and may his feet never move from this threshold."

On the walls of that wonderful palace are to be found sculptures describing the whole reign of this king, together with the characteristics of the peoples he had conquered—"people from the four corners of the world, of foreign speech, of manifold tongues, who had dwelt in mountains and valleys, whom I, in the might of my arms, had carried away into captivity, and commanded to speak our language."

This striking personality was succeeded by his son Sennacherib, who figures upon the monuments in very gorgeous apparel, seated upon a richly-carved throne.

Now it had been the custom of those of his ancestors who had claimed any kind of rule over Babylonia to go to the ancient city and put their hands into those of the god who presided over the temple there; after which they were openly declared to be "Shak-kanak," or "Ruler of the Land." But the inhabitants waited in vain for the new king to take the same step. Sennacherib, in his lofty pride, considered that such a custom placed Babylonia in the position of a sister-kingdom rather than that of a subject state, and had himself announced at Nineveh as king of Babylonia without more ado.

The Babylonians, however, made a firm stand. Their records mark the year following Sennacherib's



succession as "*kingless*," and they at once made overtures to the exile Merodach. Scarcely had he returned when the news of the approaching host of Assyria sent him once more into the wilderness, and the march of the conqueror through the land was marked by a trail of smoking ruins.

From this scene Sennacherib was sharply recalled by the revolt of a league of Phoenicians, Philistines, Egyptians, and Ethiopians, with Hezekiah of Judah, against the Assyrian yoke.

These allies were defeated by the irresistible Assyrians at the great battle of Ekron. This and the ensuing campaign is described by Sennacherib or his scribe in words too forcible and picturesque to be omitted :—

"The priests, the chief men, and the common people of Ekron who had thrown into chains their king because he was faithful to Assyria, and had given him up to Hezekiah the Jew, who had imprisoned him like an enemy in a dark dungeon, feared in their hearts——

"The king of Egypt, the bowmen, the chariots, and the horses of the king of Ethiopia had gathered together innumerable forces, and gone to their assistance. In sight of the town was their order of battle drawn up. They called upon their troops.

"Trusting in Assur my lord, I fought with them and overthrew them. I marched against the city



WINGED BULL FROM NINEVEH.

(*In the British Museum.*)

Ekron, and put to death the priests and the chief men who had committed the sin of rebellion, and I hung up their bodies on stakes all round the city. For the rest I proclaimed a free pardon.

“But as for Hezekiah of Judah, who had not submitted to my yoke, I besieged, I captured forty-six of his strong cities by battle-engines, by battering-rams. Hezekiah himself I shut up like a bird in a cage in Jerusalem, his royal city. I built a line of forts against him, and I kept his heel from going forth out of the great gate of his city. I made his country small!

“The fear of the greatness of my majesty overwhelmed him, even Hezekiah, and he sent after me to Nineveh, my royal city, by way of gift and tribute, the Arabs and his bodyguard whom he had brought for the defence of Jerusalem, his royal city, along with thirty talents of gold, eight hundred talents of pure silver, precious stones, thrones of ivory, an elephant’s hide and tusks—a vast treasure, and he sent his ambassador to offer homage.”

Now to those who have followed the course of events the question will occur as to why this mighty conqueror was apparently satisfied meekly to return to his own land at this crisis, instead of crushing the king of Judah once for all and annexing his little kingdom.

The Assyrian monuments afford us no answer—

their silence was their discretion. But we learn from the Jewish chronicles that the Assyrian army, descending upon Jerusalem "like the wolf on the fold," was smitten in the night by "the hand of the Lord," probably by means of a pestilence, which left most of the soldiers dead upon the ground where they lay.

" For the Angel of Death spread his wings on the blast,
And breathed in the face of the foe as he passed ;
And the eyes of the sleepers waxed deadly and chill,
And their hearts but once heaved, and for ever were still.

" And there lay the rider, distorted and pale,
With the dew on his brow and the rust on his mail ;
And the tents were all silent, the banners alone,
The lances unlifted, the trumpets unblown.

" And the widows of Asshur are loud in their wail,
And the idols are broke in the temple of Baal ;
And the might of the Gentile, unsmote by the sword,
Hath melted like snow in the glance of the Lord."

Such a calamity was more than enough to account for Sennacherib's hasty departure to his own land.

Before he had been given time to recover from a blow which filled the western nations with deep relief and thanksgiving, Babylon again seized the chance to rebel. The army was gathered, and a brave bid made for independence. Says the king of this attempt : " Even as swarms of locusts pass over the country, they hastened onward to do battle with me. The dust of their feet rose before me as when a

mighty storm-wind covers the face of the wide heaven with rain-laden clouds.

"With the weapons of Assur my lord, and the onslaught of my terrible battle, I made their breasts to quake, and drove them to bay. Like a violent shower I scattered their standards and their tents on the ground, limp and in tatters. With the bodies of their warriors I filled the valley as with grass. They abandoned their tents, and to save their lives they trampled on the corpses of their own warriors; they sped away even as young swallows scared from their nests."

No sooner, however, had Sennacherib won the battle thus vividly described upon the "cylinder book," than he proceeded to wreak a cowardly revenge upon the chief city of the revolting country. The palaces of Babylon were plundered, the people sold into slavery, the walls destroyed, and the city burnt to the ground. "In order that, in the course of time, no one may find the place of this city and of its temples, I covered it with water," says Sennacherib, and he turned the waters of the canal so as to flow over the ruins.

Thus a most ancient city, with its priceless records of a curious and interesting civilization, was lost to the world by the stupid vengeance of an angry king.

No wonder that Babylonia groaned in spirit, and that for the next eight years her chronicles record,

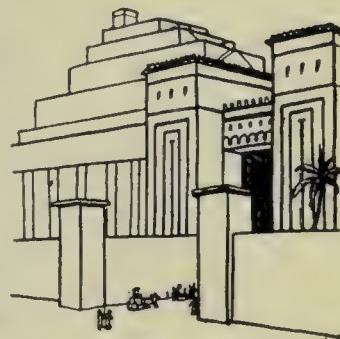
with a pride that, though shaken, was still uncrushed,
“There was no king in Babylon.”

Fortunately for history, this tyrant king was succeeded by his son Esarhaddon, who seems to have been the only Assyrian monarch who cared to treat the nations conquered by him with kindness and consideration.

Very early in his reign the goddess Ishtar was said to have taken him under her special protection, and to have come to him, saying, “I am Ishtar of Arbela. By thy side I go; fear not. The Great Lady am I. Fear not, O Esarhaddon! I will ease thy heart. Upon mankind trust not; bend thine eyes upon me; trust to me. I am Ishtar of Arbela.”

And in the first campaign which the young monarch undertook against his own revolting subjects she seemed to have kept her word. “Ishtar, lady of war and battle, stood by my side. Their bows she shattered; their line of battle, so closely ordered, she broke through; and in their array the cry resounded, ‘This is our king!’”

The great work of Esarhaddon was, however, the rebuilding and restoration of Babylon, the city that his father had so wantonly destroyed. During the lifetime of Sennacherib, when he, as one of the royal princes, had held the office of viceroy in Babylonia, he had become filled with affection and veneration for the ancient kingdom; and he now delayed the



proclamation of his kingship till he had held the hands of the god Marduk, which had been carried off to Nineveh, and so fulfilled the conditions of a Babylonian king.

Under the care of Esarhaddon, Babylon became a leading town of the Assyrian Empire, second only to Nineveh. Much of his time was passed there, and thither was brought in chains Manasseh, king of Judah—soon, however, to be released and sent home again by this most merciful monarch. We have already seen in a previous chapter what renown he won as conqueror of Egypt; and under him the glory of the Assyrian Empire reached its highest point.

Within the next fifty years that proud empire was to be destroyed. On the tablets to be seen in the British Museum we may find Assur-bani-pal, a triumphant figure, the “great and noble king.”

“When the great gods firmly seated him on his father’s throne the seed bore fivefold, the surplus grain was two-thirds, the cattle were good in multiplying; in his seasons there were plenty, in his years famine was ended.”

Assur-bani-pal was no soldier. He left warfare to his generals, and gave himself to the study of literature and art. He it was who brought thousands of “cylinder books” from Babylonia and stored them in the great library of Nineveh. Many scholars also



THE SACRED TREE WITH EAGLE-HEADED DEITIES.

(Assyrian sculpture.)

were employed by him to "edit" these books, and to make translations of those that were written in the most ancient language known in Babylon into the Assyrian tongue.

Possibly this pre-occupation of the royal scholar accounts for the fact that the foundations of the empire were beginning to totter. Yet outwardly all seemed well. Homage was offered to Assur-bani-pal apparently by unknown kings coming from unknown lands; for we find that men "of strange garments" tried to gain audience of the king, and were found to understand not a word of what was addressed to them. The king tried them in vain with "all the languages of the rising sun and of the setting sun;" and at length it was somehow discovered that they were ambassadors sent by the king of Lydia in Asia Minor, a country described as "a district where they cross the sea, a remote place, of which the kings my fathers had not heard speak the name;" and that their errand was to win the alliance of Assyria.

This occurrence was explained by the Assyrian monarch in a highly satisfactory way:—

"The greatness of my mighty loyalty was related to the king of Lydia in a dream by Assur, 'the God my Creator,' thus: 'The yoke of Assur-bani-pal, king of Assur, Take, and by speaking his name, capture thine enemies.'

"And the same day that he had seen the dream he sent his messengers to pray for my friendship!"

Suddenly, in the midst of all this peace and self-satisfaction, Babylonia again rose in revolt, and was joined by Egypt, Palestine, and Arabia. When Assyria emerged, breathless and badly shaken, from the struggle, it was to find Egypt lost entirely, and Babylonia but very partially subdued.

The last public act of Assur-bani-pal was the celebration of a great triumph as a thanksgiving for this scanty victory. In his royal chariot, drawn by four conquered chieftains, he was borne to the gates of the temple of Assur, where he held a solemn thanksgiving. After that we hear of him no more. He probably retired to his palace at Ninevah, and passed his days in the study of literature.

In the hands of his successors the weakened empire trembled to its foundations. Closer pressed the fierce Manda tribes, probably in origin a wild race of nomadic people from the north-east of Asia, whose provinces had been ravaged by Assyrian conquerors. No hand was held out to help the falling empire, for the feeling of the whole western world was expressed in the words of the great Hebrew prophet who said of her:—

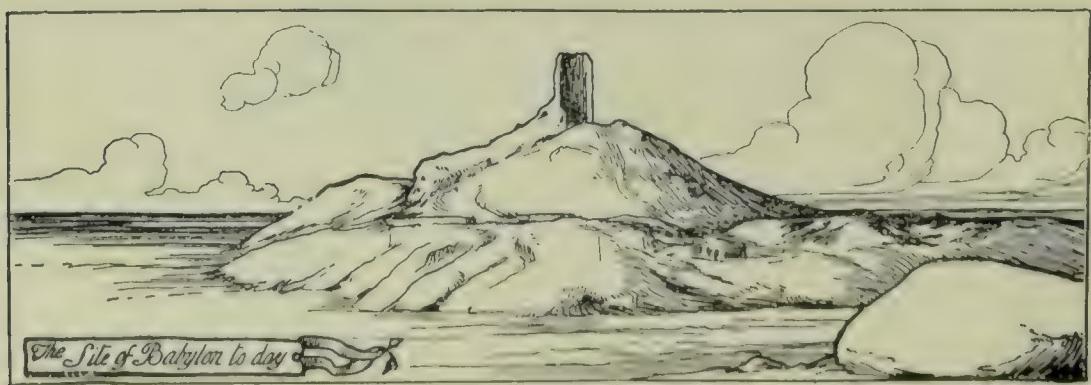
"All that hear the report of thee clap the hands over thee: for upon whom hath not thy wickedness passed continually."



At length the end came. Nineveh herself was closely besieged by the Manda tribes, and its people, finding their fasts and prayers were all in vain, looked on in silence whilst their king, Sin-shar-iskun, set fire to his royal palace and perished in the flames. The walls of the city fell ; the river Tigris, rising in flood, washed over the ruins ; and for many centuries the very site of the famous capital of the Assyrian Empire remained unknown.

“ Thy shepherds slumber, O king of Assur ;
 Thy worthies are at rest.
 Thy people are scattered upon the mountains,
 And there is none to gather them.”

But they had taught the world a grand lesson of warfare and of empire extension in days when conquest was the only means of carrying civilization into distant lands. Where they failed as empire-builders was in their inability to bind their conquests to them by any stronger bond than the strained link of taxation without any compensating advantages. For one can scarcely expect a conquered nation to regard the gifts of civilization as unmixed blessings when they are offered in exchange for freedom.



Chapter VI.

THE SECOND EMPIRE OF BABYLONIA.

(626–539 B.C.)

DURING the days in which Assyria, beset by foreign foes, was tottering to her destruction, an active and ambitious soldier, named Nabopolassar, who was acting as viceroy in Babylon, suddenly threw off the bonds that bound him to the Assyrian king, and declared the independence of Babylonia.

Under his strong rule this ancient kingdom became once more an important empire, small indeed, and enjoying but a brief period of prosperity, but managing, nevertheless, to compress into that time—barely a century—an immense amount of glorious achievement.

This new empire was established, however, not by the Babylonians themselves, but by a race called the Chaldæans, from the Sea Lands south of Mesopotamia, which, by bringing in fresh life and energy into the more ancient land, gave her a new and vigorous existence.

This had not lasted for more than about twenty years, when Necho, king of Egypt, realizing her growing importance, determined to annex the upstart little empire at one blow. But Nebuchadnezzar, son of the Babylonian king, not only beat his army at Karkemish, but pursued the fugitives into Egypt in a way that

looked as though he meant to conquer that country also. The news of his father's death recalled the prince to Babylon, from which he set forth next year upon a round of conquests.

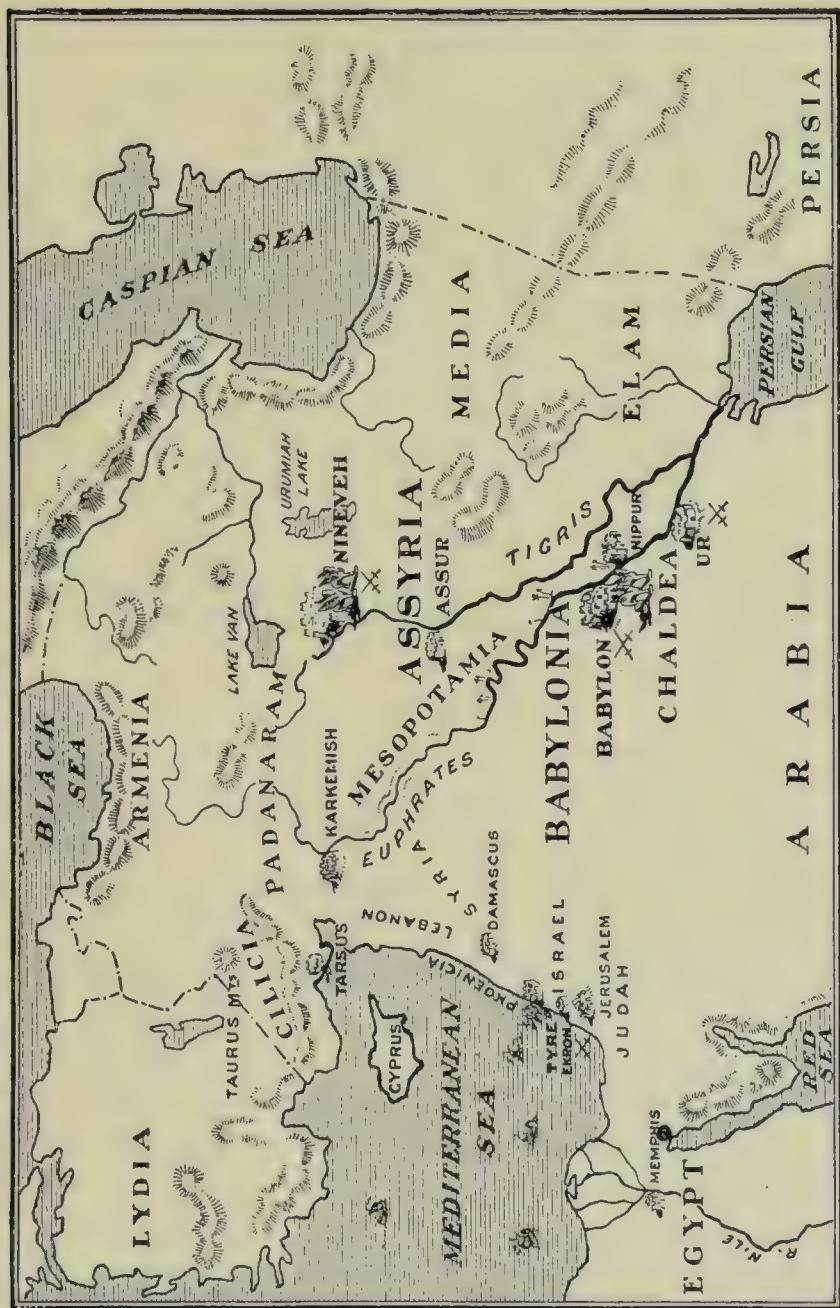
When Jehoiakim, king of Judah, dared to assert his independence of Chaldæan rule he was deposed, and Zedekiah was placed as a vassal prince upon the throne.

When Tyre, the chief city of Phœnicia, rebelled and maintained a long siege against the forces of the conqueror, Zedekiah took the opportunity to send for Egyptian forces to aid him in trying to free himself from the Chaldæan yoke. But the forces of Nebuchadnezzar were soon upon him. The Egyptians were hounded out, Jerusalem was taken, and the unfortunate Zedekiah was blinded and sent as a prisoner to Babylon.

Years before, this had been foretold by the Hebrew prophet, who had said : "I will bring him to Babylon, to the land of the Chaldæans ; yet he shall not see it, though he shall die there."

This was the occasion for the long captivity of the Hebrews, lasting for seventy years, during which that patriotic people, home-sick for their Judæan hills and streams, were forced to "hang up their harps in a strange land."

Within a few years Nebuchadnezzar had made himself master of a considerable part of Egypt also, and



MAP OF THE EASTERN NATIONS.

A R A B I A

had become, without question, the foremost monarch of the Ancient World.



We find nothing in the records of his period of madness, described so vividly in the Book of the Prophet Daniel; but this is not surprising when we remember that Eastern etiquette was careful not to chronicle the darker sides of the royal existence.

The last days of this great "emperor," as we may well call him, were spent in adorning and enlarging the city of Babylon, which from his time became known as one of the seven wonders of the world. When Nebuchadnezzar died, the glory of his empire came to an end.

During his lifetime he had managed to keep the Manda tribes at bay, partly by alliance, partly by seeing that they were well occupied in maintaining their hold on Assyria.

But after his death the Manda and Persian tribes united with the Medes, under the rule of a brilliant young chieftain named Cyrus, who had now conquered the whole of Asia Minor, and was pressing close upon the Babylonian borders.

Babylon was ruled at this crisis by Nabonidus, whose son Belshazzar seems to have acted as regent for him in the capital. Nabonidus himself was a strangely different monarch from the founder of the empire. When Babylon was threatened, he made no

attempt to strike a blow for her, but fled to another city, and ordered her walls to be manned, not by soldiers, but by the images of gods and goddesses collected from all the country round.

Belshazzar, indeed, raised an army in haste, and advanced against the foe ; but it was too late.

Leaving him in chains and with his forces scattered, Cyrus, king of the Medes and Persians, advanced upon the city of Babylon, which opened its gates without any show of resistance. As the record says : “ He made them enter without fighting and without contest ; he made trenches all round the city, and the god delivered Nabonidus, who did not reverence him, into the hand of Cyrus.

“ All the people he crushed beneath him, and they came and kissed his feet.”

Thus was fulfilled the “ words written upon the wall,” which the Hebrew writer tells us were sent as a warning to Belshazzar as he sat at the feast :—

“ MENE : MENE : TEKEL : UPHARSIN.

“ God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it.

“ Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting.

“ Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.”

“ Babylon is fallen : that great city Babylon !” was the death-knell of one of the oldest empires of the Ancient World.



The Warning to Belshazzar.
(From the picture by Professor Jules Fripp.)

Chapter VII.

THE MEDES AND PERSIANS.

(C. 553-333 B.C.)

THE people who had brought about the fall of the earliest civilized powers of the Eastern World consisted of two kindred races, the Medes and Persians, of which the Medes were the first to establish an empire for themselves. This fell an easy prey to the fierce attacks of the tribe known as the Persians, and the two races soon became one people—the people of the “Medes and Persians.”

They differed in many respects from the inhabitants of Egypt on the one hand, and from those of Assyria and Babylonia on the other, and were much more closely akin to the European and Hindu nations. Originally, no doubt, they were wandering tribes, moving about with their flocks and herds wherever they were tempted by good pasturage and water; and hence, from the earliest times, they were worshippers of Nature in her various forms.

Their nature-worship was full of poetry and imagination. The fleecy clouds moving across the sky were to their minds flocks of sheep, which sometimes stayed to pour their milk, in the form of rain, upon the earth when it was thirsty. Or they called the rain-

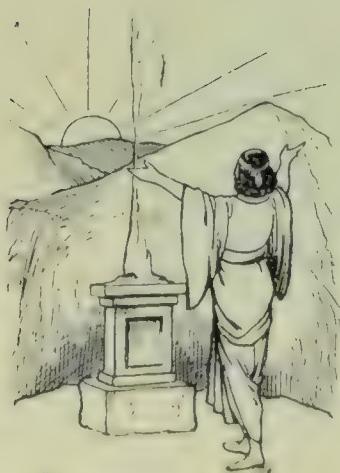
clouds the Water Maidens, emptying their pitchers from the sky.

When the earth was dried up for lack of rain, they said that the sheep had been driven off by storm-fiends, or that the Maidens had been hidden in dark mountain caves, there to remain until the god of Thunder came to smite the rock with his rod of fire and to release the Water-Bringers from their captivity.

Many of these picturesque ideas are to be found in the "Avesta," the holy book of the Medes and Persians, in which the religious beliefs of the people were collected by a famous wise man known as Zoroaster. We know very little about him, or even when he lived, though he may have done so, it is thought, about a thousand years before the birth of Christ.

It is from the "Avesta" that we learn that the Persians worshipped the Power of Light, "the Sky-god," as their chief deity; while Darkness, "the Cloud-Serpent," was their evil genius. The sun itself

was worshipped because it was the eye of this god of Light; Fire, because it was his son; and "Mithra," the daylight, known as the "Lord of Wide Pastures," was said to be the herald of the sun's rising and to follow his setting. He is "the first of the heavenly gods who reaches us before the undying, swift-horsed sun; who, foremost in



golden array, takes hold of the beautiful summits, and from thence looks over the abodes of the people . . . who goes over the breadth of the earth after the setting of the sun, and touches both ends of this wide, round earth, and surveys everything that is between the earth and the heavens."

Zoroaster paints also a vivid picture of the god of Light contending with the demons of Darkness. "He is a warrior with a silver helm, a golden cuirass, strong and valiant, who kills with the poniard; he is the warrior of the white horse, the most fiend-smiting of all gods."

In face of this searching Light-god the people were taught that no falsehood, deceit, or disloyalty could exist:—

"On whatever side is one who has lied to Mithra, on that side Mithra stands forth, angry and offended, and his wrath is slow to relent. Those who lie unto Mithra, however swift they may run, cannot outrun him; riding, cannot outride him. Sad is the abode, unpeopled by children, where dwell men who have lied unto Mithra."

Since Fire was the son of the god of Light, it was held in very high esteem by the Persians. It was the first care of every head of a family to cherish his own hearth-fire, and to feed it frequently with chips of fragrant wood, in order that it might never go out. Thrice in the night he arose and, having washed his

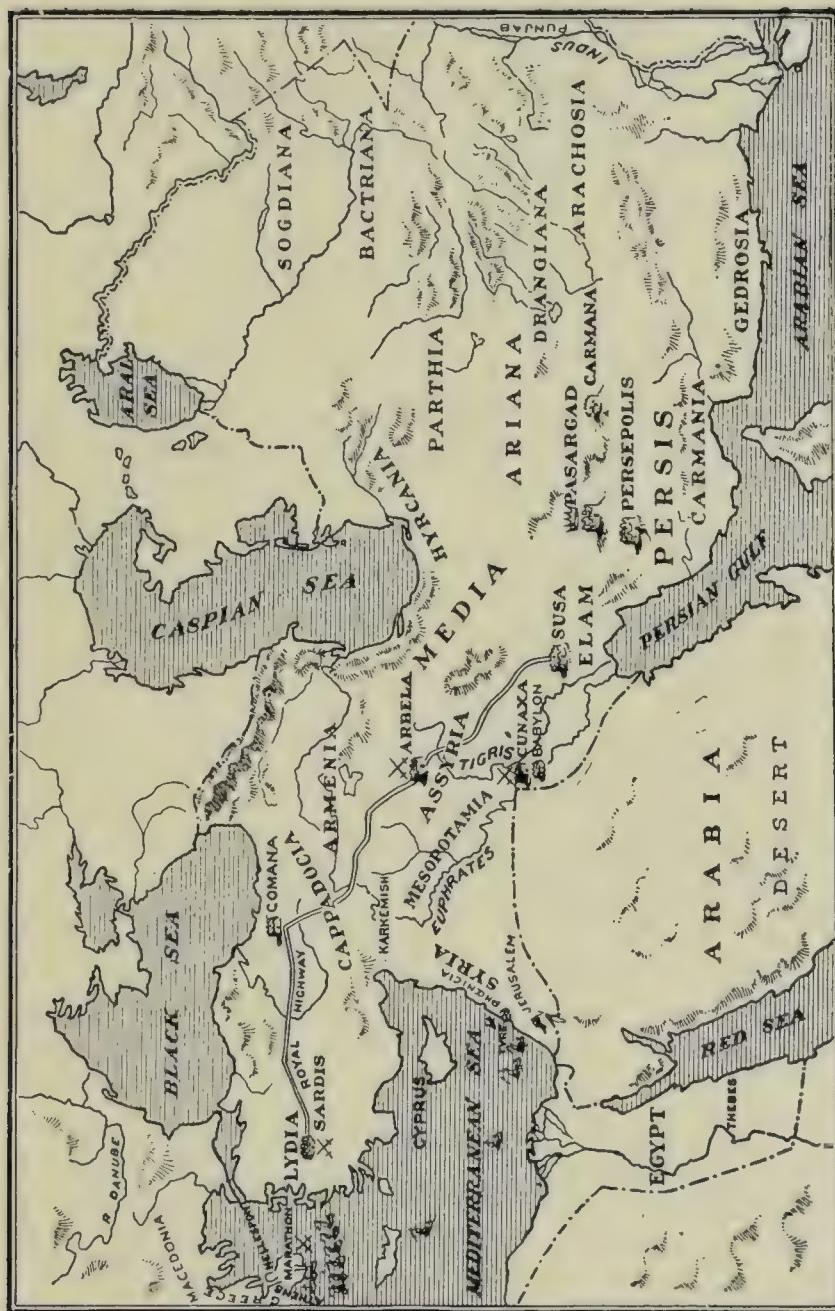


hands, performed this sacred duty. To keep the fire free from all pollution, the priest, when performing his office in the temple, wore a cloth before his mouth to prevent his breath from soiling the pure flame, as the modern Parsee does at the present day.

The people of the Medes and Persians were of a lively disposition, fond of poetry and art, and noted for their energy, courage, and love of truth. Every Persian boy was taught by his schoolmaster to ride, to shoot with the bow, and never to tell a lie under any circumstances. He learnt also to be kindly disposed and hospitable to strangers, and was not afraid of showing his feelings ; for, as the Greeks tell us in their plays, the Persian, when excited, laughed and cried and sang without restraint.

The monarch, the "Great King" as he was called was a very important personage, whose lightest word made his subjects tremble before him. When he went from place to place he was accompanied by a footman, who held a golden stool to assist him to mount or dismount from his chariot, a bow-bearer and quiver-bearer, a parasol-carrier, one who carried a fan, and another who bore his handkerchief and scent-bottle.

The palaces in which he lived were finely ornamented with stones of various colours. Inside, the walls were covered with rich hangings of green and white and violet, hung between ivory pillars. Over the bed of the king hung a golden vine, whose grapes



MAP SHOWING THE DOMINIONS OF THE "GREAT KING."

were each a precious stone, and his wash-hand basin was fashioned out of solid gold.

If a person entered the royal presence unannounced, he was liable to instant execution, unless the monarch deigned to extend to him the golden sceptre which was always at his side. It was thus that Queen Esther was received, you will remember, when she ventured into the presence of Ahasuerus the king, whom we know of in Persian history as King Xerxes.

For his part the monarch was bound never to change an order when once it was given, or to break a promise when once passed; and thus arose the proverb concerning the "law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not."

Education was a very important matter among the Persian people. At the age of five a boy began to learn how to endure great extremes of heat and cold, to go without food and sleep upon occasion, and to cross a river without wetting his bow and arrows. When he was fifteen he became a soldier of the king's army, in which he had to serve till he was fifty. Thus was produced a race of warriors before whom, for a time, all the nations of the world trembled.

The legends in which the early history of Persia is disguised are full of beauty and interest. Most of them centre round the figure of the mighty Rustem, the Persian Hercules, whose great strength saved

the country many a time in the hour of peril. These, however, you must read elsewhere, for here we have room only for the story which tells of the birth and early life of Cyrus, the first historic leader of the Medes and Persians.

The legend says that Kei Kaoos, king of Persia, had a brave son named Cambyses, who was brought up by the hero Rustem himself.

In those days, as for many past years, the Persians were sorely harassed by the attacks of a certain powerful monarch called Afrasiab, who is called a king of the Tartars, but whom we may conjecture to have been the ruler of the empire of the Medes, who, in alliance with the Manda tribes, had already won renown by their conquest of Assyria. Possibly, indeed, Afrasiab was a Manda king himself, for by this time these people seem to have got the upper hand in Media.

Against him the young Cambyses was sent, and when he found that Afrasiab was quite willing to make peace, the Persian prince agreed to do so, demanding first, as surety of good-will, a hundred hostages, which were at once given to him.

Now when Kei Kaoos heard of this he was very wroth, saying that his son should never have ceased to make war upon this ancient enemy of Persia. Moreover, he proceeded to demand that the hostages should be given up to him for instant execution.



So dishonourable an act could not be tolerated by the young prince, who very sadly left his native land and joined Afrasiab.

The latter received him with joy, gave him his daughter in marriage, and made him ruler of a province, saying, "Henceforth war will no longer desolate the earth, and the lion and the leopard will lie down together."

But busy plotters came to the court of the old king and poisoned his mind against the prince, saying that he had come only to spy out the land and presently to bring in the troops of Persia. And so, in a fit of rage, Afrasiab marched against Cambyses, and finding the latter would not condescend to defend himself, had him cruelly put to death.

Meantime a little son, Kei Khooros, or Cyrus, as we know the name, had been born to Cambyses and his wife, whom the latter, fearing her father's wrath, hid in the mountains among the shepherds.

But when Kei Kaoos heard of the ill fate of his son, he repented bitterly of what he had done, and prayed Rustem, the hero of Persia, to aid him in revenging the prince.

Together they managed to drive Afrasiab out of his kingdom ; but this was little joy to the Persian king, seeing that he had now no heir to succeed him. At length he came to hear of the existence of his grandson, and sent messengers to search for

the lad ; and after seven long years a noble youth appeared at the court of Kei Kaoos, and was joyfully received by the old king, who proceeded, with his aid, to annex the empire of his lifelong foe, Afrasiab.

So runs the legend, and it certainly accounts in some degree for the fact that Cyrus, a hitherto unknown prince, managed by means of a strong party at the court of Media to incite the subject Persians to throw off the yoke of subjection, and to make himself head of the new empire, under the title of "the Great King of the Medes and Persians." Within fifty years he had extended the boundaries of the empire from Upper Egypt to the borders of what we now call Russia, and from the *Æ*gean Sea to the river Indus.

One of the kingdoms conquered by Cyrus was that of Crœsus, king of Lydia, said to have been the richest man of his day.

When Cyrus first threatened him, the Lydian king consulted the oracles as to whether he should meet with success in the coming fight. The answer was that "if he made war on Persia he would destroy a great empire." Confident that this meant encouragement to himself, Crœsus went forth against Cyrus with a glad heart. But the empire to be destroyed was his own.

When the unfortunate king was led forth to die before his conqueror, the story goes that Cyrus,



watching him intently as he stood before the flaming pyre on which he was to be burnt, heard him say to himself, "Thou, O Solon, wast wiser than I."

The Persian king asked him what he meant by this saying, upon which Croesus told him that, many years before, the Greek philosopher Solon had visited him ; and after he had shown him his vast possessions, he had asked the wise man whom he considered to be the happiest man on earth. But Solon, instead of answering, "Thou, O king," as Croesus fully expected, only replied, "Call no man happy until he has ended his life in a fitting manner."

The truth of this saying was now only too apparent to the unfortunate Croesus. But Cyrus, touched by his words, spared his life, and gave him a high position at the Persian court.

We have already seen how Babylon fell before this victorious monarch, whose whole career is one long record of victory. Yet the words of the wise Solon were true in his case also, for he fell in battle fighting against one of the petty tribes of Central Asia ; and the queen of this tribe ordered his head to be cut off and flung into a dish of blood, saying, "All thy life thou hast thirsted for the blood of thine enemies : drink now thy fill."

But his followers erected a fine marble tomb over his rescued body at his royal palace at Pasargad, the remains of which may still be seen. Two hundred



AN ASSYRIAN KING RETURNING FROM A LION HUNT.
(From a slab in the British Museum. Photo by Mansell.)

years later the tomb, enclosing his golden coffin, was found by the Greeks, and upon it were these words:—

“O man, I am Cyrus, who won domination for the Persians, and was king of Persia. Grudge not this monument then to me.”

Some years later the Empire of Persia was ruled by Darius, who has been rightly called “the true founder of the Persian state.” He had first to reconquer almost the whole of the territory won by his predecessors; and when this task was over, he set to work to organize his kingdom. All parts of his vast empire were to be under the same kind of government, and were bound to pay definite yearly taxes in place of the uncertain but often heavy sums which they had formerly been liable to pay from time to time. The administration was put into the hands of *satraps*, or independent governors, who were, however, held closely in check by the king. Good roads were made throughout the provinces; and Darius is said to have been the first king to issue a definite coinage, and to give his name to the “daric,” a gold coin of this period.

Next he determined to enlarge the borders of his immense empire by conquering all the Greek colonies which lay on the Asiatic coast of the *Ægean Sea*. The love of freedom, however, was a very strong point in the Greek character; and these colonists, aided by troops from Athens, one of the two leading Greek

states, rebelled, marched against the royal city of Sardis, and burnt it to the ground.

When Darius heard of this his anger was kindled against Athens even more than against the rebels themselves. "Athenians! Who are *they*?" he cried, and forthwith commanded his cup-bearer to say to him thrice a day as he filled his cup, "Master, forget not the Athenians."

Within the next few years he not only destroyed the flourishing cities of the coast, but prepared a huge army wherewith to crush the whole of Greece unless it would at once submit to him. But when his envoys demanded earth and water in token of submission from Athens and Sparta, the former threw the messengers into a pit and the latter into a well, bidding them take from thence as much earth and water as they pleased. Upon this the army was at once dispatched, and after several mishaps, owing to shipwreck, landed on the plain of Marathon.

Had the Persians won that fight, as seemed only too likely, the whole history of the world would have been changed; for Greece would have fallen into the hands of Darius, and would have become a mere province of his great Eastern Empire, losing her own marked character altogether. And if this had happened, Rome, which borrowed her civilization and literature largely from Greece, would have developed on very different lines; and since Western Europe, including Britain, was



brought into such close touch with Rome, and through her with Greece, we can easily see that upon that fight at Marathon (B.C. 490) a great deal was to depend.

The victory fell to the Greeks, and only a small remnant of that great Persian host returned to Darius with their tale of defeat at the hands of the spirited Athenians ; and the death of the old king left the task of revenge to his son Xerxes.

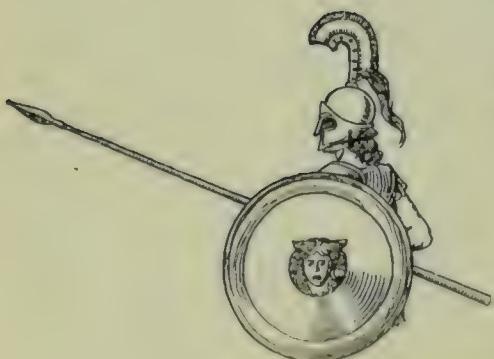
Ten years later another huge army, led by Xerxes himself, crossed the Straits of Hellespont over a bridge of boats, constructed by engineers whose lives were to be forfeited if anything went wrong with it.

From thence Xerxes marched into Central Greece, but only to find his way barred at the narrow pass of Thermopylae by a little band of Spartans under King Leonidas, aided by a few troops of allies. The latter were so terrified at the news of the enormous host led by the great king that Leonidas scornfully bade them depart, and prepared to hold the pass with his three hundred Spartans alone.

“Deliver up your arms !” was the message sent by the invader when he heard of the absurdly small force that presumed to block his path.

“Come and take them,” was the unmoved answer of the king.

“Their arrows are so thick that they obscure the very sun,” was the report brought in by a trembling spy.



"So much the better ; we shall fight in the shade," was the reply of one of his dauntless Spartan comrades.

Within a few hours the mouth of the pass was blocked by the corpses of the famous "Immortals," the flower of Xerxes' host, and it looked as though this "key of Greece" would never be taken at all. But a traitor in the camp betrayed the Spartans, and the staunch little band laid down their lives at their post.

The delay had enabled the rest of Greece to prepare for the ensuing conflict. Athens, deserted by her inhabitants, was burnt by the oncoming foe ; but the latter was now dependent upon the aid of the Persian fleet, which had just appeared upon the coast.

Many of the Greeks were most reluctant to attempt a fight by sea with the huge vessels of Persia ; but the will of Themistocles, the first great sea conqueror of history, carried the day. The little Greek fleet, shut up within the bay of Salamis, must either fight its way out or yield at once, and so the battle began.

On a high rock overlooking the bay sat the king of Persia, confident of his success ; and seldom has pride met with so complete a downfall.



"A king sat on the rocky brow
Which looks o'er sea-born Salamis ;
And ships, by thousands, lay below,
And men in nations : all were his !
He counted them at break of day ;
And when the sun set, where were they ?"

It was, as in the case of the Armada in later days, a fight between the old spirit and the new. The stately Persian ships could do nothing against the agile little Greek vessels, and the astonished king had to beat a hasty retreat.

“ In heaps the unhappy dead lie on the strand
 Of Salamis and all the neighbouring shores.
 Raise the funereal cry, with dismal notes
 Wailing the wretched Persians. Oh, how ill
 They planned their measures—all their army perished ! ”

The power of the Persian Empire was now on the wane, and nearly a century later it was distinctly weakened by the divisions set up within it by the action of a certain prince named Cyrus.

This prince made a plot against his brother, Artaxerxes the king, by which he hoped to obtain the crown himself. To this end he obtained the aid of a fine army of ten thousand Greek soldiers, and with these at his back he marched openly against the king.

Artaxerxes, however, was ready to meet him, and an unexpected conflict took place at Cunaxa, where Cyrus, in his haste to reach his brother and kill him with his own hand, exposed himself recklessly in the thickest part of the fight, and was quickly dragged from his horse and killed.

The armies then drew off, and the Persian general, anxious to lose no more of his men, determined to settle the matter by treachery. He sent for the



Hunters and Traders.

(From the painting by Lord Leighton, P.R.A. In the Royal Exchange, London.
By permission of the Gresham Committee.) (See page 112.)

leaders of the Greek army to discuss the terms of peace. They entered his tent, and were never seen alive again.

The adventurous story of the Greek soldiers, left thus without guides or generals in a pathless wilderness, more than a thousand miles from their own land, is one of the most thrilling in history.



They met with every kind of hardship—starvation, thirst, constant attacks from the hostile mountain tribes, disease and cold—and many a time were tempted to lie down and die; but one of their number, a soldier named Xenophon, who afterwards wrote the whole story of the march, encouraged them to persevere, and at length one day, as they struggled to the top of a ridge of hills, they saw in the distance the gleaming waters of the *Ægean*.

“Thalassa! Thalassa!” (The sea! The sea!) was the cry that rose from every throat of the brave ten thousand, and though they were still far from their native land, they felt themselves at home.

Some years later a weak, handsome monarch called Darius Codomannus sat upon the Persian throne. Against him came Alexander, the young king of Macedon, who had just reconquered the Greece his father had won, and was destined to become the conqueror of the world.

Mighty as were the forces of Darius, they had no chance against the generalship of this young king

when at length the armies met ; and no sooner had the cowardly Persian monarch realized this than he sprang from his chariot, mounted a horse, and rode away for his life. Seeing the chariot empty, the Persians cried out that he was dead, and broke away in confusion. The royal chariot, bow, shield, and robes fell into the hands of the foe, as well as the mother, wife, daughter, and infant son of the recreant king.

From a safe distance Darius offered a huge bribe and the hand of his daughter in marriage if Alexander would make peace, and was met with the stern reply :—

“ What mean you by offering money and lands ? All your money and lands are mine already ; and if I wished to marry your daughter, I should do so at once without your consent. If you want mercy, deliver yourself into my hands.”

This, however, Darius was too much afraid to do ; and having gathered together all the available fighting forces in the kingdom, he prepared for the decisive conflict at Arbela.

Here again the Persian king fled at the first sign of reverse, leaving his brave soldiers without a leader. He made for the north, but now even his own followers turned against him ; and finding Alexander was pressing hard upon them, one of his servants stabbed him in the back. His dead body was found

by the conqueror lying near the roadside, and, by the orders of the king, was given honourable burial.

Thus the “Ram with two horns,” as the Hebrew prophet Daniel called the power of Persia, was overthrown by the might of “the He-goat with the notable horn between his eyes.”

“And there was no power in the Ram to stand before him, but he cast him down to the ground, and stamped upon him: and there was none that could deliver the Ram out of his hands.”

Chapter VIII.

PHœNICIA, THE CARRIER OF NATIONS.

(C. 1400–332 B.C.)

LET us next take a glimpse at the story of three nations, none of which ever attained to the position of a great empire, but all of which had an important influence on the development of other empires, both at the time of their own existence and in later days.

Phœnicia was the name given to the strip of land bordering the Eastern Mediterranean which slopes up to the mountains of Lebanon, with their groves of olives, vines, and cedar trees, and lies between Syria on the north, and Palestine or Canaan on the south.

By her position this little country, much smaller than England, was admirably suited to become the carrier of nations both by sea and by land. Her chief city, Tyre, which rose up "at the entry of the sea," was "a merchant of the people for many isles," and in the fifteenth century B.C., and probably long before, held all the carrying trade of the Mediterranean. Her adventurous seamen were the first to sail out of this sea, to voyage round Africa, and to reach the shores even of far-off Britain, from whence they carried off cargoes of tin long before the Romans ever heard of the island.

From the heart of this little country passed the long files of camels laden with purple cloth from Tyre, glass from Sidon, and wrought metal-work from Damascus ; and through her midst stretched the great caravan routes between Egypt and Babylon. It is thus that the prophet Isaiah fitly describes one of her cities :—

" She was the mart of nations ;
She was a joyful city ;
Her antiquity was of ancient days ;
She was a city that dispensed crowns ;
Her merchants were princes,
And her traffickers the honourable of the earth."

The people of this land were notable not only for their fearless seamanship, a most unusual thing in those days, but also for their remarkable progress, at a very early period, in the practical arts of civiliza-

tion. They were one of the earliest nations to develop an alphabet and a system of arithmetic, which their trade made very necessary. They shared with Egypt the credit of being the first glass-blowers and metal-workers. They were the first shipbuilders, and the first to discover the use to which the shell-fish upon their shores might be put in order to procure the famous "Tyrian purple" dye, which, by the way, was a brilliant crimson in colour.

To them came every nation of the world when skilled labour was needed. We read in Homer that when Achilles offered as a prize to the swiftest runner the most perfect bowl that the world afforded, it was from Phœnicia that it was obtained. The exquisite robe, stiff with embroidery and "shining with the brightness of a star," which Hecuba, the queen of Troy, offered to the goddess Athene, was made by the skilful fingers of Phœnician women.

It was to Hiram, king of Tyre, that David, king of Israel, sent when he wanted the materials and decorations for his great palace at Jerusalem ; and it was to him, again, that Solomon naturally turned when he began to build the Temple.

"Send me," he wrote to Hiram, "a man cunning to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in iron, and in purple, and crimson, and blue, and that can skill to grave all manner of gravings.....Send me also cedar trees, fir trees, and aljun trees, out of Lebanon :



THE QUEEN OF SHEBA VISITS KING SOLOMON.

(From a drawing by Professor Innes Fripp.)

for I know that thy servants can skill to cut timber in Lebanon ;.....and, behold, I will give to thy servants, the hewers that cut timber, twenty thousand measures of beaten wheat, and twenty thousand measures of barley, and twenty thousand baths of wine, and twenty thousand baths of oil."

To the skill of the Phoenicians was also due the inner decoration of the Temple—the moulding of the oxen that supported the "molten sea," and of the lions which supported the royal throne ; and the two great pillars, Jachin and Boaz, that guarded the outer porch, were made upon Phœnician models.

This Hiram, under whom the little kingdom seems to have risen to its utmost height of prosperity, evidently became very friendly with the king of Israel, for we find him and Solomon exchanging riddles, which the wise king always guessed aright. Then there arose a man of Tyre who scoffed at Hiram's discomfiture, and promised to ask King Solomon a riddle which he should never answer. What it was we know not, but the man of Tyre triumphed, and thus maintained the character for wisdom that his country had always claimed.

Some years after the death of Hiram we find Jezebel, daughter of the Tyrian king Eth-baal, making a marriage with Ahab, king of Israel. This close connection of the two countries was the means of introducing into the latter the worship of Baal (the

god Bel of the Babylonians) and of the goddess Ash-toreth (the Assyrian Astarte). The mention of this reminds us at once that their religion forms the darkest blot upon the Phœnician character. For the worship both of Baal and of Ashtoreth was carried on by means of degrading and horrible rites, an important part of which was the sacrifice of little children. It is small wonder, then, that such a religion as this was vehemently opposed by the prophet Elijah in the days of Ahab.

But it is by no means with Canaan only that we find Phœnicia in close contact. The island of Crete was not far from her coasts, and there the Phœnicians would find, in very early days, an active-minded people quite ready to embrace a more advanced civilization than their own, and even to compete with the people of Tyre and Sidon as seafaring folk.

Whether Crete or Phœnicia first became civilized is quite uncertain and matters not at all; it is enough to realize that we have clear evidence that the two were connected at a very early period—at least sixteen centuries before Christ, possibly before that. The grim legend of the Minotaur told concerning Crete was undoubtedly borrowed from the Phœnicians, and the bovine monster is only another form of that terrible bull-god, Baal Moloch, whom the latter worshipped.

The legend says that Minos was a great king of Crete and a mighty master-builder, who not only





built a wonderful Labyrinth, but managed to imprison therein a monster named the Minotaur, of human form, but with the head of a bull. Furthermore, he induced the creature to remain there by supplying as food seven maidens and seven youths from Athens, in Greece, who were sent to Minos as tribute every nine years. One day a young hero named Theseus determined to free his country from this terrible tax. So he had himself included among the doomed ones ; and when he reached the island, he prevailed upon the fair Ariadne, daughter of the king, to give him a thread, which he could unwind as he entered the Labyrinth, and so find his way out again. With this he entered boldly into the maze, killed the Minotaur, and returned in safety to his native land.

For a long time this was regarded as nothing but a fable, but within the last few years some most interesting discoveries have been made at Knossos, in the island of Crete, which show that the "House of Minos," with its mazy corridors and subterranean conduits, was the actual Labyrinth of tradition, that Minos was a real person, and that the Minotaur was the Phœnician god, who, as we have seen, was worshipped with human sacrifices.

The date of this palace is about 1700 B.C. It is extraordinarily modern in many ways. Mr. Evans, its discoverer, says of it: "Near the northern entrance the lower rooms contain remarkable remains of fres-



THE MINOTAUR.

(By G. F. Watts, R.A. From a copyright photograph by
Frederick Hollyer.)

coes, exhibiting groups of ladies in very modern costume. The palace area east of the great court discloses, in addition to a beautifully inlaid ivory draught-board, crystal plaques, porcelain, and mosaics, signs of industry on a princely scale, with olive presses and a sculptor's studio among them."

The palace also contains "wall-paintings, the colours of which are wonderfully preserved, depicting processional human figures, scenes from the bull-ring in which girls as well as young men appear as toreadors, warriors, and elegantly-dressed ladies seated in their courts or looking out from their balconies and windows; sea pieces, with dolphins and other fish; landscapes, with flowers and foliage. But chief, perhaps, in interest and beauty are the early painted vases *dating back to a period long before 2000 B.C.*, coloured, with designs of lilies, flowers, and foliage, and others which, for egg-shell fineness of fabric, for grace of form and delicacy of colouring, have never been surpassed."

Here, too, has been found a "highly developed system of writing, some eight years earlier than the first written Greek records, and going back six or seven centuries even before the first dated record of Phœnician writing."

It is well worth while to pay special attention to these signs of a very early civilization in Crete, partly because they evidently date back as far as the days of

Egypt and Chaldæa, partly because they form a kind of stepping-stone between the civilization of Phœnicia and that of Greece, and chiefly because there is good reason to think that there is a distinct connection between the art of Ancient Britain and that of the prehistoric Knossos in Crete. Probably the Cretans or the Phœnicians, with whom they were closely allied, had passed up to the Baltic coasts in their hunt for amber, which we know was worked by the Phœnicians in the days of which Homer wrote. From thence their influence would reach Denmark and Ireland, and pass onward to Britain.

It is certainly interesting to see how, in spite of our boasted progress in art, we have really got very little further than those people of Crete had got nearly four thousand years ago.

Let us now glance quickly at the chief events in the later history of Phœnicia. Most of these grouped themselves round the city of Tyre, a twin city, built partly on shore and partly on an island off the coast. When the Assyrian conqueror was swooping down upon the nations of the eastern world, he met with universal submission in Phœnicia till he came to Tyre. But there, although the neighbouring cities, jealous of their successful rival, supplied the enemy with a vast navy wherewith to attack the sea-girt town, he found himself repulsed. Not only did Tyre disperse his fleet, but she also took five hundred

prisoners, "on account of which," it was quaintly said, "great honour accrued to all that dwelt at Tyre."

In deep wrath the Assyrian king was forced to depart, leaving behind him a besieging force, and cutting off the inhabitants from all water-supply from the mainland. The men of Tyre, however, sank wells and obtained an abundant supply of water. After five years the siege was abandoned.

Esarhaddon, however, proved more successful, and when the men of Lebanon revolted against his iron rule he took a terrible revenge. "I swept away," says he, "the cities of the Sidonian land, removed its castles and its dwellings, and destroyed the place of its habitations, casting its buildings into the sea. The king of Sidon, who from the face of my soldiers had fled like a fish into the midst of the sea, from the midst of the sea I caught him and cut off his head. The king of Lebanon fled to his difficult mountains, but was pursued, taken, and beheaded; and the heads of the two monarchs I hung round the necks of certain of their great men."

In the middle of the seventh century, however, the power of Assyria fell, and Phoenicia sprang at one bound into the foremost place as a great merchant nation. "When her wares went forth," says Ezekiel, the Hebrew prophet, "she filled many people. She enriched the kings of the earth with the multitude of

her riches and her merchandise. Her builders had brought to perfection her beauty.

"Hermon furnished planks for the hulls of her ships ; the tallest of the cedars of Lebanon were felled to make masts for them. The oaks of Bashan formed the material for her oars ; of fine linen with broidered work from Egypt was her sail, and the benches of her ships were of ivory inlaid with boxwood."

Once again, however, was the glory of Phœnicia laid low when Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, "made forts against Tyre and cast up mounds against her..... With the hoofs of his horses he trod down all her streets ; he slew her people with the sword, and the pillars of her strength went down to the ground. He broke down her walls and destroyed all her pleasant houses ; and her stones and her timber and her dust he cast into the waters."

When Babylon in her turn fell before the might of Persia, Phœnicia made no bid for freedom, but passed quietly into the conqueror's hands. It was she who furnished a fleet to Persia, and stood in the forefront of the great sea-battle between the Greeks and the Persians at Salamis ; and it was her brave captains who had to bear the brunt of the wrath of Xerxes when the expedition failed.

Perhaps the time of her greatest glory was when she found her noble city Tyre beset by Alexander, the world-conqueror, of whose exploits we are yet to

read, in the most marvellous siege that has ever been known.

The other cities of Phœnicia had given in to the invader's demands, and Tyre, on seeing this, unwillingly agreed to do the same. Sending a golden crown to Alexander, the chief men of the city informed him that they were ready to pay him allegiance. Upon this Alexander informed them graciously that he accepted their fealty, and was about to enter the island part of Tyre in order to sacrifice to their god Melkarth. This was more than they had bargained for, and guessing that he meant to occupy their city with a foreign garrison, they replied that if the king wanted to sacrifice, he could do so in the temple in the city of the shore without entering the island portion at all.

Upon this Alexander fell into a fit of fury, and sent back word that if they would not open their gates to him he would break them down. This was the signal for action, and at once the Tyrians closed their gates and fortified their walls, jeering meantime at the foemen who sat upon the shore, without a fleet, and apparently helpless.

Then there came a sudden wave of movement, and the sentinels realized that the soldiers of Alexander had begun to build a huge causeway between the island city and the mainland. Upon this were erected great wooden towers, from which the attackers dis-

charged stones and darts upon the besieged inhabitants, protecting the workers below, meantime, by curtains of leather, behind which they toiled.

At last the Tyrians managed to send out a fire-ship, with a great cauldron of sulphur and bitumen hanging from the prow, which put the towers and wooden foundations in a blaze. A gale helped on the flames, and a heavy sea washed the burning structure away.

Quite undaunted, Alexander began a new causeway, using now whole trees in its construction, which the Tyrians at once sent divers to drag out with hooks, and so cause a universal collapse; all this while the fleet of Tyre was constantly harassing the besiegers, so that Alexander had at length to borrow the ships of Sidon, and to use them to shut up the Tyrian vessels in their own harbour.

Upon this the men of Tyre spread sails before the harbour mouth, that their movements might be kept secret, and then crept out, without sound of voice or splash of oars, upon the hostile vessels, taking them by surprise and disabling many. But, meantime, the causeway was completed. In vain the brave little band lowered bags of seaweed to deaden the force of the battering rams, and flung red-hot metal upon the soldiers who had thrown bridges from the wooden towers to the city walls. It was



only when nearly every man had sold his life dearly that Tyre finally yielded, and Alexander entered a city of the dead to perform his long-delayed sacrifice.

From henceforth Phœnicia no longer existed as an independent kingdom, but her fame endured for many generations. For though not herself an empire, she possessed the unique characteristic of having won a foremost position among the great nations of the world, not by virtue of her conquests nor by her skill in warfare, but solely by her enterprise, her commercial instinct, and her practical genius.

Another remarkable point about this little strip of coast-land is that her inhabitants have in many ways exercised a far more lasting and important influence than nations of very much larger size and greater renown. Apart from the effect left upon other countries by their excellence in all forms of art, we must remember that, as world-wide travellers, the Phœnicians carried the message of civilization to all the lands they visited, but especially to Europe.

They extended this influence also by means of their colonies, of which they had several in Greece, in Sicily, in Crete, and, most important of all, at Carthage. Hence they form a very valuable link of civilization between the Eastern and the Western Worlds.

Chapter IX.

THE HEBREWS.

(C. 2200–66 B.C.)

THE story of the Hebrew people has been told once for all in the historical books of the Bible, and we must only notice here the main points in the sacred records. Small as their country was, the Hebrews, like the Phœnicians, can never be entirely omitted from the story of the great empires of the world, partly because of their close connection with the latter, partly because of the very important influence they have had upon both ancient and modern civilization.

We see them at one period emerging from the land of Chaldaea, a tiny tribe under the leadership of Abraham, whose early home had been “Ur of the Chaldees.”

Some centuries later they are found in bondage in the land of Egypt, under the iron hand of that Rameses of whom we have already read. From thence they escape under the leadership of a great lawgiver, Moses, who gives them a “constitution” strikingly like that of Hammurabi of Babylonia in some respects. Then, about ten centuries before Christ, their little land of Canaan is ruled by kings, one of whom, Rehoboam, loses the confidence of his people, and causes a division in the country which results in the establishment of the rival kingdoms of Israel and Judah.





Rebuilding the Walls of Jerusalem.
(From the picture by W. G. Simmonds.)

We saw in the last chapter how close a connection was drawn between the people of the Hebrews and the Phœnicians during the building of the Temple; but soon the shadow of Assyria darkened the land. Weakened by anarchy and civil war, ten of the tribes of Israel fell an easy prey to Shalmaneser. They were carried away by the conqueror, and disappear henceforth from the pages of history.

For a while the kingdom of Judah held its own against the mighty Assyrian king Sennacherib, under the brave Hezekiah; but a few years later Jerusalem was seized, first by the Egyptians, then by the conqueror Nebuchadnezzar, and the king, his family, his army, the nobles, and all able-bodied labourers were carried into captivity at Babylon.

This was a terrible blow to a nation whose strongest characteristic was pride of race and love of its native land. Sadly sings the Hebrew poet—

“ How solitary does she sit, the many peopled city !
 She is become a widow, the great among the nations.
 Weeping, weeps she all the night ; the tears are on her cheeks ;
 From among all her lovers she hath no comforter ;
 Her friends have all dealt treacherously, they have become her
 foes.”

Meantime, during those seventy long years Babylon had fallen into the hands of Persia, and one of the Hebrews, Daniel by name, had found high favour at court, and was able to procure a decree of restoration to his native land.



Then once more rose the walls of the Temple, amid the tears of the “ancient men that had seen the first house, who, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice.”

Slowly the work proceeded, for the proud Hebrews had scornfully rejected the offer of the alien dwellers in Samaria to give them help; and the latter used their influence at the Persian court to prevent the “bad, rebellious city” from being rebuilt. But nearly ninety years later, King Artaxerxes of Persia began to realize the importance of the city as an outpost in an empire already threatened by Greece. So by the commission of Nehemiah, the king’s Hebrew cup-bearer, the work went on apace.

Meantime the might of Persia had fallen before that of Alexander, as we have seen; and as the latter marched through Phœnicia, he sent to demand submission also from Jerusalem.

A curious and interesting story is told of the means by which this submission was obtained.

It is said that the high priest of the Temple, who was in charge of the holy city, made reply to Alexander that he was bound by his oath of fealty to the Persian Darius, and could not deliver up Jerusalem into his hands. Little doubting the effect of such a message on the fiery young conqueror, the high priest then prepared to die. But in a vision he was told that nothing should hurt the city of God; and so,



when Alexander approached the walls, the high priest bade the people go out to meet him wearing the white garments of peace, while he led the priests at the head of the procession.

When he drew near, instead of giving the signal for an attack, the young emperor leapt from his horse, and kneeling before the high priest, did honour and obeisance to the sacred name embroidered upon his head-dress. Upon this, one of his astonished officers asked why he, whom all men honoured, should worship the high priest.

"I worship," replied Alexander, "not the high priest, but his God. For in a vision a figure in that very dress appeared to me, exhorting me to pass over into Asia and conquer Persia."

Then, holding the priest by the hand, he entered the Temple, and offered a sacrifice there.

It is hardly wonderful that the Jews gladly submitted to such a conqueror, whom their own prophets had foretold should vanquish the Eastern World. But after his death Jerusalem suffered deadly loss at the hands of Antiochus of Syria, and her people were either martyred for their faith or driven into exile.

Then there arose the Hebrew patriot, Judas Macabeus, who succeeded so well in his efforts for freedom that for a while the land was at peace. Soon after his death on the battlefield, the king of Syria himself is said to have sent a great sacrifice—bulls with gilded



horns, sweet spices, and cups of gold and silver—to lay upon the altar of Jehovah, the mighty God.

Last of all, Jerusalem fell into the hands of the Romans, in the days when Syria had become a province of Rome. When the Roman general Pompey arrived within the gates of the city, he betook himself to the Temple, and, heedless of the horror of the Jews when they saw a "Gentile" profaning it, walked right into the "Holy of Holies," the sacred spot into which even the high priest only went once a year. Accustomed as he was to the images of the gods of Rome and Greece, his astonishment was great when he found the place empty of statue or symbol. To his credit be it told that he departed at once, leaving the treasures of the Temple untouched.

Thus the land of the Hebrews became a Roman province, "paying tribute to Cæsar," and its independent history comes to an end.

The chief legacy that the Hebrews have left to the Modern World is, of course, their religion, which, from the earliest times, differed from all others in being the worship of the one God, Jehovah. From time to time the religious ideas of other nations crept in, as we have seen; but there were always some, and those the leaders of the people, who kept firm to the old faith.

Besides this greatest of all legacies, the Jewish people have handed down to us, in the Old Testament, one of the most varied, complete, and marvellous literatures that





THE REPUTED FORM OF THE TEMPLE OF SOLOMON.

the world has ever known. Traditions, history, songs, proverbs, prophecies, poems, all are represented there, and have exercised an immense influence, spiritual, mental, and moral, on the nations of Western Europe.

Chapter X.

THE STORY OF CARTHAGE.

(850-146 B.C.)

ONE of the colonies of Phœnicia, mentioned at the end of Chapter VIII., was that of Carthage, founded originally as a trading-station on the African side of the Mediterranean coast.

From this small beginning sprang a nation, unimportant in size, but so successful in the arts of war and of trading that in the third century before Christ Carthage was not only the richest city for its size in the world, but was seriously threatening to take from Rome the glory of becoming Mistress of the Sea.

The legend that tells of the foundation of the city, about the middle of the ninth century before Christ, says that a certain beautiful princess of Tyre, named Dido, was married to a wealthy husband whom she greatly loved. But her brother Pygmalion, the king of Tyre, coveted this man's wealth, and slew him, hoping



to get the treasure into his hands. Then Dido was nearly heartbroken, and many of the chief citizens would have risen up against the king for the wrong he had done. Hiding her grief, however, she bade them say nothing, but be ready to follow her wherever she went. She sent then to her brother, saying that she wished for ships and servants, who should convey her possessions to her house, where she wished to take up her abode. Pygmalion, who hoped thus easily to gain his desire, joyfully complied ; but Dido won over his servants by her youth and beauty, and when they had put all her rich treasure on board, she embarked with them and with a company of the friendly citizens, and set sail for Africa.

When Pygmalion heard of this, he would have prepared a fleet, that he might follow and slay the princess ; but he was withheld by an oracle, who said, "It will go ill with thee if thou hinder the founding of the most fortunate city in the world."

So Dido landed in peace, and bought from the inhabitants of that African coast a piece of land "as large as could be covered by an ox's hide." When this agreement had been made, Dido, with true Tyrian craft, at once cut the hide into strips, and enclosed enough space for a large town.

Then they began to dig the foundations of the central house of the city, and the first thing turned up by the spade was the head of an ox. At this the wise

men of the party shook their heads, saying, "This signifies a fruitful land, but one full of labour, and a city that shall always be subject to others." So they made another attempt, and on turning up the skull of a horse, the wise men said, "This foundation telleth of victory ; and this nation shall be powerful, and great in war."

So the city rose ; but Dido, most unfortunate of women, met with a sad fate. Her citizens wished

her to safeguard their position by making a marriage between her and the Moorish king, their neighbour. They bade her "go to her husband ;" but she, mindful of her first love, made a great bonfire, and having sacrificed to the gods, threw herself upon her sword in the midst of it, crying out, "You bid me go to my husband. See, then, for I go."

Three centuries after its foundation Carthage was strong enough to forbid the Romans, then fast growing in power, to sail beyond the "Fair Promontory" that lies to the north of the city, to conquer Sardinia and Malta, and to maintain an important series of trading-stations in Sicily.

For many years the Carthaginians were engaged in a long struggle with the Greek settlers upon this last-named island, the details of which we need not dwell on here. It was during this struggle that we hear of the famous voyage of the Carthaginian, Hanno, who gives us one of the earliest collections of "traveller's tales"



on record. On a slab found in the temple of Saturn at Carthage we find a description of his voyage beyond the Pillars of Hercules—known now as the Straits of Gibraltar—along the West African coast, where he discovered a strange race called Troglodytes—evidently a tribe of negroes.

There he also found “a country full of fire, in the middle of which was a great fiery mountain that touched the stars.” This sounds like some volcanic region, but presently he is lost in wonderment at the habits of another savage race, in whose description we seem to recognize gorillas and apes.

Then we have an account of another adventurer, who reached some islands that were very likely Great Britain and Ireland. It is probable that the Carthaginians shared in the profits of the tin trade carried on between England and Phoenicia ; if so, it looks as if this seaman’s description of these islands was “touched up” in order to discourage foreigners from interfering with them, for the writer says that the seas around these islands are so thick with seaweed that it is like sailing through a wood. There was no wind to move the ships, and everything was hidden by dense fogs, through which could dimly be seen in the surrounding waters the heads of great sea-serpents.

Herodotus, the Greek historian, gives us an amusing description of the delicate way in which Carthaginian trading operations were carried on. “There is a

certain country," he says, "outside the Pillars of Hercules. When the Carthaginians come hither, they unlade their goods, and set them in order by the side of the sea. This done, they embark on their ships again and make a smoke. And the people of the country, seeing the smoke, come down to the sea and put gold beside the goods, and depart to a distance. Then the Carthaginians come forth from their ships and look, and if it seem to them that the gold is of equal value with the goods, they take it and depart; but if it seem not equal, then they return to their ships and sit still. Then the barbarians come and add other gold to that which they put before, until they persuade the Carthaginians.

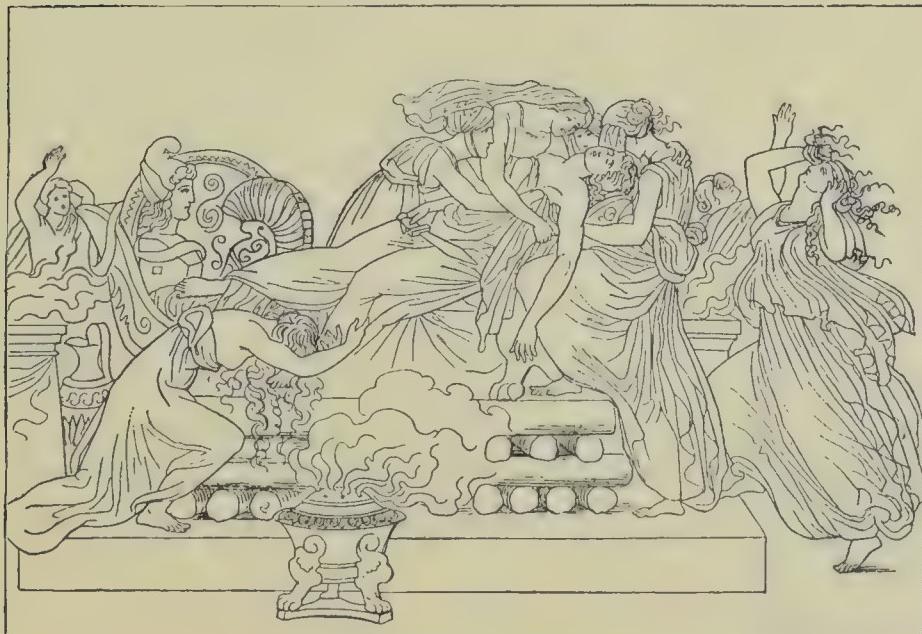
"And neither do any wrong to the other."

Meantime the Carthaginians in Sicily were fighting hard against the Romans in a struggle which, though it left them worsted, had the important effect of forcing Rome, hitherto only a land power, to build a great fleet as the only way of maintaining her hold upon the sea. In spite of being driven out of Sicily, the men of Carthage had by no means given up their claim to an empire outside Africa.

A certain Hamilcar, a general of the army of Carthage, deeply grieved at the failure of her arms in Sicily, determined to carve out for her a new dominion among the rich silver mines of Spain. But before he set out he led his young son Hannibal, a boy of eight



DIDO DISCOVERS THE FLIGHT OF AENEAS.



DEATH OF DIDO.

The poet Virgil tells that Prince Æneas, sailing from Troy after its downfall, stayed for some time at Carthage, where Dido fell in love with him. When he left the country, Dido took her own life in the manner shown above.

years old, to the altar upon which he was about to offer his last sacrifice on Carthaginian soil, and bade him lay his hand thereon and swear eternal enmity to Rome. From this time the story of Carthage is almost entirely the story of Hannibal.

When he had established a province in Spain, Hamilcar died, and the work was carried on awhile by his son-in-law, Hasdrubal. But meantime Hannibal had grown to manhood, and, mindful of his oath, was on the look-out for a chance of annoying Rome.

Much to his joy, the Romans were so greatly moved by his attack on the Spanish town of Saguntum, which was under Roman protection, that they made a declaration of war. They little guessed what this meant, or how the whole country of Italy was to be convulsed for the next four years by the conflict they had provoked.

But Hannibal was well pleased. "Come back in early spring," said he to his army, "and I will be your leader in a war from which both the glory and the gain will be immense."

Many were the difficulties in his path, however. He had first to cross two high mountain ranges, the Pyrenees and the Alps, and to convey over them the whole army with its baggage, as well as troops of elephants, an animal by no means suited to climbing dangerous heights.

Nearly all these beasts were lost, together with many of the "mercenary" troops, who had joined



him not from motives of patriotism but for money, and who now either turned back or perished in a climate to which they, Greeks or Spaniards as they were, were quite unaccustomed. But Hannibal never lost heart, nor ceased to cheer his men with bright hopes for the future.

"You are climbing," said he to his exhausted followers, "not only the walls of Italy, but of Rome itself. After one, or at the most two battles, we shall have the capital of Italy in our hands."

This was, however, rather too sanguine; but when the army, worn with travelling as it was, entered the "land of promise," the well-disciplined troops of Rome were put to utter rout before it.

This was mostly due to the great skill of Hannibal himself in placing his men. On one occasion, for instance, he stationed his troops in ambush so that they commanded a narrow plain, bordered on one side by Lake Trasimene, on the other by steep mountain slopes. Through this marched the Roman army in pursuit of the enemy, which was supposed to be in flight. Thus the former were caught in a trap, and perished by thousands, being either driven into the lake or falling at the points of the Carthaginian swords.

Once again, when Hannibal, owing to the tactics of Fabius, Rome's greatest general, found himself shut up in a plain which was bordered by a deep river on one side and by the sea on another, and whose only outlet was a pass held by Roman troops, the Car-

thaginians had burning twigs tied to the tails of a huge drove of oxen, and when night fell, ordered the beasts to be driven up the heights that surrounded the pass. The Roman army, seeing lights twinkling all around them, thought themselves surrounded by the enemy, and fled to the hills for safety; whereupon the wily Carthaginian calmly led his troops through the pass and marched onward towards Rome.



Again at Cannæ, when it seemed as though they must be defeated by superior numbers, the Carthaginians were successful.

"In four days hence," cried one of their generals, "you shall be supping in the Capitol at Rome." But Hannibal turned aside from Rome, hoping first to make sure of his hold on Southern Italy, and little suspecting that the tide of fortune was on the turn.

He had taken up his quarters in Capua, which was now besieged by the Romans, and finding that his army was being thinned by illness and weakened by luxury and inaction, for the first time he sent to his own people for more help. He asked in particular that his brother, Hasdrubal, who had meantime been fighting hard against the Roman army in Spain, should come to his aid.

Long and patiently did he wait, and at length his answer came in the shape of his brother's gory head, flung by the besiegers into his soldiers' lines as they lay before Capua.

For three years longer Hannibal waged a desperate war in South Italy, hoping all the time for aid from his country. At the end of that time came a peremptory summons to return to Carthage, which had meantime been attacked by Scipio, the Roman general.

“Gnashing his teeth and groaning, and scarcely able to restrain his tears,” the great soldier declared that he had been conquered at last, not by Roman soldiers, but by the jealousy of the Carthaginian Senate. And as he left the shores of the land for which he had fought so well, “he cursed himself that he had not led his soldiers, dripping with the blood of Cannæ, to Rome itself.”

Disheartened as he was, it is no matter for wonder that at the battle of Zama, where Scipio awaited him on Carthaginian soil, he was utterly defeated, and forced to flee to the city of his birth.

There he was looked upon with little favour, and soon forfeited even that by his bitter gibes, and by his refusal to humble himself before the chief men of the city. “You laugh at our woes—you, who are the cause of them all!” they exclaimed indignantly, complaining loudly at the loss of the huge sum which Rome, after publicly burning the Carthaginian fleet, demanded as a war indemnity.

“My laughter is more reasonable than your tears,” he replied; “for you, who kept silence when your ships were burnt, weep when you are called on to sacrifice



your private gains. I fear me much," he added, with grim significance, "that you will soon find that this is the least of the trouble you will have to bear."

These words turned all men against him, and so Hannibal determined to leave his country for ever. But the harbour was barred to him, since his flight would have been at once detected by the merchant ships of which it was full. Summoning the captains to a great banquet, Hannibal asked the loan of their sails and yards wherewith to construct a mighty tent; and while they were busy feasting, he slipped away to a vessel and sailed off to Antioch, secure from pursuit by the disabled ships.

Hannibal now joined the forces of the king of Syria, who was preparing an immense army to repel the Roman invasion of his own country.

"Will not this be enough for the enemy?" asked the king, as he pointed to the rich dress and jewelled armour of his soldiers.

"Ay," answered the grim Carthaginian, "enough even for them, though they be the greediest nation upon earth."

His judgment was seen to be only too true when those magnificent forces were dispersed, and Hannibal, demanded by Rome as the price of peace, became once more a wanderer. Some time later he found himself again in Asia Minor, fighting against the Roman power; and once again did Rome demand his head

Hannibal taking an Oath to fight against the Romans.

(From the picture by Benjamin West, P.R.A.)



as the price of a treaty. Then Hannibal, weary with fifty years of warfare, swallowed the dose of poison carried always by him in a hollow finger-ring, saying, "Let me free the Roman people from their long anxiety, seeing they find it tedious to wait for an old man's death."

Meantime the doom of conquered Carthage was hastening swiftly upon her. Suspicious of her loyalty, the Romans put it to the test by ordering her people to leave the city, now to be destroyed, and to settle down at any other place that was not within ten miles of the coast. "Thus," jeered the Roman ambassador, "you will not be reminded of the greatness you have lost."

But this verdict meant absolute ruin to the folk of a city that depended for prosperity entirely on its maritime trade, and, desperate at length, they sent a message of defiance to the dreaded Roman Senate.

Immediately the forces of the conqueror swooped upon them. The harbour was blocked by a wall constructed by clever Roman engineers right across its mouth; but the Carthaginians made a new channel from the city to the sea, built fifty new warships, and attacked those of the enemy unexpectedly in the rear. Within the city itself both men and women toiled at making swords and darts and bows; and when the supply of strings gave out for the catapults, the women cut off their hair and wove it into cord. Nothing, however, could withstand the onset of the Romans;

and at length some of the inhabitants, seeing the day was lost, shut themselves up in a temple at the top of the citadel with Hasdrubal, ruler of the city, and his wife and children, to die by starvation, if not by the sword.

But the coward Hasdrubal, seeing that those of the citizens who gave themselves up were spared by the Roman leader, slipped out of the citadel and came crawling to the latter's feet, imploring that his life should be spared.

Even as the Roman granted this, and pointed to his prisoner in triumph, a flame shot up from the temple roof, and in the midst of it appeared the wife of Hasdrubal, holding her two little boys by the hand.

"Man of Rome," she cried, "on thee I call no vengeance from Heaven—thou hast but used the arts of war; but for this Hasdrubal, traitor to his country and his gods, to his wife and to his children, I pray that Heaven and thou may punish him."

Then turning to Hasdrubal, she exclaimed, "Villain, traitor, coward! I and my children will find a tomb in the flames; but thou, mighty general of mighty Carthage, shalt adorn a Roman triumph." With these words she flung her babes into the thickest of the fire, and perished with them.

So that city of the sea was laid low, and not one stone was left upon another to show what her beauty and power had been.

No other country has had such an influence on the growth and development of Rome, for it was only by constant efforts in every direction that the latter managed to hold her own against her rival both by land and sea.

Chapter XI.

GREECE, THE LAND OF IDEALS.—I.

(2000–400 B.C.)



WE come now, in our survey of the empires of the past, to one that belongs to Europe itself, and so lies much nearer home than those of which we have been lately reading. But the whole period of the early civilization of Greece, which lasted for more than twelve centuries before her actual history begins, was so closely bound up with that of the Eastern World that we can scarcely claim her as a European country until she began, about the tenth century before Christ, to develop on independent lines.

The story of this early period, hidden for many a century under the dust of ages, has been unfolded for us in recent times by the discoveries made in Crete and on the site of Ancient Troy, as well as at Mycenæ and Tiryns in Greece: and these discoveries make clear to us that the wonderful pictures painted

in the poems of Homer, the great Greek poet, refer to the actual life lived by real men and women in this bygone age, and that stories of what had actually occurred have been collected by him and woven into his stirring poems.

We have seen how Crete had become a natural stepping-stone between Egypt and Greece, and that her very complete civilization must have been handed on to the latter country ; for Crete was but one of those “islands of the sea” of which early Greece consisted.

At Kissarlik, which is believed to occupy the site of the ancient city of Troy, have been found the remains of six palaces, each one built on the ruins of the rest ; and one of these must have been the palace of Priam, king of Troy, whose story we read in the pages of Homer.

Still more interesting, perhaps, are the glimpses of life in this early period which we get from the discoveries at Mycenæ and Tiryns. Let us not think for a moment that these people of long ago were savages, or even that they had much to learn from us with all our fancied progress. They knew how to build beautifully proportioned houses, with convenient cupboards such as the modern housewife sometimes looks for in vain, and covered galleries where fresh air could be enjoyed in all kinds of weather. Their hearths were decorated with tiles in red, blue, and white, just as ours are nowadays ; their engravings on gems, their

mosaic wall patterns, and their workings in relief on gold are as good, if not better, than the art of any modern artificer on the same lines. An Egyptian scene painted upon a vase, together with much of the kind of decoration employed, points to a close connection with the Egypt of that day ; and this is proved again by the pictures of soldiers in Mycenæan armour found on the walls of the cities of that ancient empire of the East.

It was evidently a war between Mycenæ and Troy that became later on the subject of Homer's "Iliad," and the very weapons and armour that the poet describes are to be found on the walls of this prehistoric town. Two great gateways guard its entrance, above one of which stand the two enormous stone lions which give their name to the "Lion Gate."

This civilization lasted till about the tenth century before Christ, and was displaced by the advance of certain tribes of an alien race, who came from the mountains of the north-west—the region of the Carpathians probably—and gradually settled down in the valleys of Greece, first merely as pastoral folk, then as tillers of the soil, and finally as founders of cities. These are the first people whom we can truly call Greeks ; and though no doubt they learnt much from the earlier inhabitants with whom they now mingled, they were to a large extent cut off from the Eastern World and free to develop according to their own ideas.





THE SIBYL CONSULTING THE PROPHETIC BOOKS.

(*From the painting by Guercino.*)

The kings and military leaders of early legends often consulted the wise woman known as the Sibyl before venturing upon any important enterprise, and usually acted upon her advice.

The kind of life they lived is painted clearly for us in the pages of Homer, though the heroes and heroines of whom he tells belong to an earlier age. Simplicity was its most marked feature. Each state was ruled by a king, who is "the shepherd of his people," and also their priest and judge. His queen, or the princess, his daughter, thought it no disgrace to do the washing of the household, or at least to superintend it, though women were held in the highest honour, as also were the minstrels of the land, who attended every festival and banquet, and took an important part in the entertainment of the guests.

The greater part of the people were small farmers, until, after a union of villages had resulted in the beginnings of a city, some of them turned themselves to the art of building and other necessary industries.

As in the eastern lands, the religion of the Greeks commenced in Nature-worship, which peopled every spring and river, every forest and mountain height, as well as the sky above and the sea around their country, with gods and goddesses, nymphs and fauns.

The Greek had a very vivid imagination, and was a great lover of beauty in all its forms. Hence his gods soon became pictured by him as distinct beings with very human characteristics, as well as ideals of beauty and wisdom—always before the eyes of his mind, and



exercising, therefore, a very strong influence upon his daily life. For the life beyond the grave he cared little, though he believed firmly in its existence ; and he would probably have echoed the words that Homer puts into the mouth of Achilles : " Rather would I live on the earth as another man's servant than rule over all the dead that are departed."

His religion, as we should expect, is full of poetic fancies. The autumn marks the descent of the fair maiden Persephone to the dark realms of the under world, where Pluto keeps her hidden, while her mother, Demeter, weeps throughout the earth in search of her. When the winter rains are over, and spring comes back, this is the return of Persephone to the upper world at the call of the Earth mother when she discovers the whereabouts of her child again.

The dawn is painted by the rosy fingers of Eos as she speeds in her chariot from the Cave of Night. Zeus rules the world by means of his thunderbolts, forged by Hephaestus for the " father of gods and king of men." The sea is ruled by Poseidon, who stirs up the depths with his trident when he is wrathful ; and the daughters of Nereus, another sea-god, ride upon the white sea-horses in the time of storm.

The arts of civilization are taught by Athene, who shows men how to plant and women how to weave, and becomes the ideal of " serene, unclouded wisdom." The arts of poetry and music are taught by Apollo, the



ideal of the beauty of the mind, as Athene is of its wisdom. In honour of Apollo a yearly festival was held at Delos, the island where was his especial shrine ; and there they sang his wonderful hymn which says : " There in thy honour, Apollo, the long-robed Ionians assemble with their children and their gracious dames. A man would say they were strangers to death and old age evermore who should come on them thus gathered ; for he would see the goodliness of all the people, and would rejoice in his soul, beholding the men and the fair girdled women, and their swift ships, and their great wealth."

In this religion the famous Greek drama also had its origin. At the feast held in honour of Dionysus, god of the grape and wine, the country people would gather round the altar set up among their vineyards, and sing hymns in his praise. Then one of the little band would recite some legend of the god, and the rest would join in with cries of sorrow or joy as chorus. If it were a woeful story, a goat would be sacrificed, and the song would be called a " tragedy," from the Greek *tragos*, a goat. If a merry tale were told, full of rustic jokes, it became a " village song " or comedy. Later on other characters were introduced, the " chorus " was accompanied by a kind of dance, and other legends took the place of the story of the god. The plays, however, were still acted out of doors, and eventually in the vast theatre hollowed out of a



hill near Athens, with its tiers of raised seats, able to hold thirty thousand people at once.

Another characteristic of the Greek was his love for athletic games, which were also celebrated in honour of the gods. The most important of these festivals was held every four years in honour of Zeus, at Olympia, and was one of the few things which drew the different states of Greece together. To the Olympic contests athletes were sent from every part of the country, together with poets, dramatists, and historians, whose works were read or acted in public after the prize had been adjudged. There were held the foot race, the wrestling match, and the chariot race; and though the prize was but a crown of wild olive leaves, that was enough in a country where glory was considered as ranking far above wealth.

Yet the Greeks had great practical gifts, and were clever traders, gaining also a character for craft which was noted as long ago as the days of the "wily Ulysses" himself. During the eighth century they began to lay the foundations of their future empire by forming colonies in Asia Minor, in Italy, and in the islands of the surrounding seas. Towards the close of this period of the beginnings of Greece two great cities began to stand out from among the rest as those round which almost the whole story of the Grecian people is grouped.

Sparta, the chief city-state of Southern Greece, was



first made famous by the “constitution,” or system of life and government, said to have been imposed upon it by a legendary personage called Lycurgus. The people of this district were the descendants of a tribe which was never affected to any great degree by the earlier civilization, and which kept to its own customs in what we should call a very “conservative” manner. Their chief idea was to make themselves famous as fighting-men, since by the character of their soil they could never become wealthy. They had no time to till the barren soil on which they lived, so this became the work of the slaves whom they had conquered in battle. They despised science, painting, or art of any kind ; their money was of iron ; and they would hold no intercourse with strangers.

When a boy was born in Sparta, the “Elders” of the city decided his fate by throwing him upon a sloping roof. If he fell off, he was exposed to die upon the cold slopes of the neighbouring hills. If he clung on, he was restored to his mother till the age of seven, when he was sent to the public training school, there to go barefoot and hungry, with scant clothing, and hard boards for his bed. He was encouraged to steal, but must do so skilfully, since he was severely punished if clumsy enough to be caught at it. Every year he was scourged at the altar of the goddess Artemis, and many boys died under the lash without uttering a word of complaint.





NEPTUNE (POSEIDON), THE GREEK MONARCH OF THE SEA.
(From the sculpture by Adam in the Louvre.)

Gymnastics and the art of warfare were the only subjects of instruction, music the only recreation, and that the music of the battle-march and song of victory. At the age of twenty the Spartan youth became the soldier of the state and lived in barracks, feeding on barley bread, cheese, and the "black broth" spoken of with such loathing by the other Greeks. Everything was done, in fact, to make the Spartan's life so hideous that he gladly threw it away in the desperate struggles of the battlefield. The women were trained to look upon the return of their fathers, brothers, husbands, or sons after a defeat as being the greatest possible disgrace and calamity. When the warriors were forced to flee from an enemy, they flung away their heavy shields; when killed, their companions bore them home upon the same: hence the point of the Spartan mother's farewell speech to her only son, "Come back carrying your shield, or upon it."

Very different in character was the city of Athens, noted throughout the world for its treasures of art, and science, and literature:—



"Athens arose; a city such as vision
Builds from the purple crags and silver towers
Of battlemented clouds."

The early years of the city were darkened by civil discords, and her first beginnings of greatness date from the time when Solon became her wise lawgiver,

and gave the people a share in the government, hitherto in the hands of "aristocrats." It was, however, more than a century after his time before Athens reached her Golden Age, and became, in the time of Pericles, the fairest city upon earth.

In the centre of the city stood a lofty mass of rock called the Acropolis, a natural citadel, upon which rose a beautifully proportioned temple, called the Parthenon, every part of which was carved in relief with pictures representing the religious beliefs of the people. Inside the temple stood the famous image of Athene, "the Maiden Goddess," made of ivory and gold. Some idea of the beauty of the ornamentation in this temple can be gained from a study of the remnants of its "frieze" to be seen in the British Museum. Outside the temple stood the great bronze statue of Athene, the "Fighter in the Front" of the battle, ruling over the city, and visible to the Greek sailor far out at sea. Near by one would find the perfect little temple of the Wingless Victory, casts of which may be also seen in the British Museum.

Athens was also the home of literature, and of the wise men whom we call philosophers. One of these latter was Socrates, who, though he wrote nothing himself, became one of the masters of Greek thought. His ugly face and awkward figure, wrapped in a worn cloak, became a familiar sight in the streets of Athens during the later days of her empire, as he walked

through the market-places and arcades questioning the lads of the city and leading them into the paths of wisdom. The story is told that once upon a time one of the friends of this man went to the oracle at Delphi, who was supposed to answer the inquirer according to the mind of Apollo, and asked, "Who is the wisest man in Greece?" "Socrates," was the unhesitating answer; but when the philosopher was told of this he refused to believe it, saying he knew nothing at all. A certain statesman, who had a very high character for wisdom, then undertook to prove the matter by examining Socrates; but the latter, according to his "method," questioned the man himself till he proved that he did not even know what wisdom meant. To this, however, the statesman would not agree, and at length the philosopher declared, "The oracle was right. These wise men only *think* they know everything; whereas I *know* that I know nothing."

This sort of thing did not make him popular at Athens. He was accused of speaking against the gods; and it was certainly true that he had, while encouraging a belief in one supreme God, pointed out the unreality of much of the national religion. He was condemned to death, but as he lay in prison he went on teaching and discussing as cheerfully as ever. Then, when the last moment came, he bade farewell to his sorrowful companions, saying, "Now 'tis time for us all to go—you to life, I to death. And which of these is best is



EURYDICE.

(From a Bartolozzi engraving after Angelica Kaufmann, R.A.)

One of the most touching stories of Greek mythology was the descent of Orpheus into Hades to bring back his lost bride Eurydice, who died in consequence of a snake bite in the heel received on the day of her marriage. Orpheus was told that he must not look upon the face of Eurydice until the upper air was reached, but in the eagerness of his love he forgot the injunction, and his bride was reclaimed by the Powers of Darkness.

known only to the gods.” In this manner did Athens treat one of her greatest men, with that fickleness and jealousy which we shall find manifested again and again as we glance through the story of her empire.

Chapter XII.

GREECE, THE LAND OF IDEALS.—II.

(400–350 B.C.)

WHEN we speak of the “Empire of Greece” we ought, strictly speaking, to mean the dominion of that united country over other lands or cities. But that was impossible in a country made up of disunited and independent states, and we ought rather to speak of the Empire of Athens, or of Sparta, or of other towns which managed from time to time to get the supremacy over their neighbours.

The most united part of Greece was the southern half—the Peloponnesus—where the various states had, during the seventh or eighth centuries, bound themselves together in a league, with Sparta at their head. This was also the most powerful part of the country, seeing that the fighting force of Sparta was unsurpassed in Greece.

It was therefore to Sparta that we should expect men to look if Greece were threatened by an outside

enemy ; and it was Sparta which seemed to have the best chance of establishing an empire.

Yet, as we shall see, when her chance came, Sparta was not ready to take it ; and it was the little state of Attica, under the leadership of Athens, which came to the front instead.

The force which set the springs of empire-making in motion was the action taken at this time by the all-powerful king of Persia.

Just across the *Æ*gean, on the borders of Asia Minor, were scattered the Greek cities of the coast, which were far more advanced in civilization and commercial prosperity than those of the mother-country.

When Cyrus swept over Asia Minor, these cities fell into his power for a while ; but they were always on the look-out for a chance of asserting their independence again, and early in the fifth century they rebelled against King Darius, with the help of a few shiploads of men from Athens. The revolt was crushed after a six years' struggle, but Darius never forgave the Greeks of the peninsula for the part they had played in it.

In the chapter that tells the story of the Persian Empire we have seen how the attempts of Darius at the conquest of Greece failed, and how at Marathon and at Salamis, first the army and then the fleet of Persia were put to ignominious flight by the men of the Land of Beautiful Ideals.



The Acropolis, Athens

So far, honours had not been divided between Athens and Sparta. The former had won the day at Marathon. When their swift runner Phidippides appeared in Sparta, spent with having run a hundred and fifty miles in twenty-four hours, he had but breath to gasp—

“ Persia has come !

Persia bids Athens proffer slaves’ tribute, water and earth ;
 Razed to the ground is Eretria—but Athens, shall Athens sink,
 Drop into dust and die—the flower of Hellas utterly die,
 Die, with the wide world spitting at Sparta, the stupid, the
 stander-by ?
 Answer me quick—what help, what hand, do you stretch o’er de-
 struction’s brink ?
 How ?—when ?”

But Sparta, mindful of the ancient precept—

“ No warfare, whatever the odds
 In your favour, so long as the moon, half-orbed, is unable to take
 Full-circle her state in the sky,”

would not stir a foot. And so, while they waited for the full moon, the day of Marathon was won by the sons of Athens, and the freedom of the Western World was assured. When the next great expedition arrived under Xerxes, ten years later, Sparta again failed to seize her opportunity. The great Olympic games were in progress, and the main body of the Spartans were content to send a little band of three hundred men under their king, Leonidas, in order that the Pass of Thermopylæ, the entrance to Central Greece, might be held by him against Xerxes until the games were over.

It was a hopeless task, but the brave Leonidas managed to hold the post with his three hundred long after all his allies had fled. The Persians had to be scourged on by their officers to attack them; but not a man of that dauntless three hundred thought of leaving the spot he had been bidden to defend.

Over the place where every man had fallen at his post was set up this epitaph in later days: "Stranger, tell the Spartans that we lie here in obedience to their laws."

On the eve of Salamis, the Spartan admiral wished to draw off his ships in order to fortify the entrance to the Peloponnesus, leaving the northern half of Greece as a prey to the Persians. When Themistocles urged the necessity of attacking the Persian fleet without delay, the admiral even raised his stick to strike him. "Strike, but hear me," was the reply of the dauntless Athenian; and his words, together with the news that the Persian ships had completely surrounded the Greek fleet in the bay of Salamis, settled the matter.



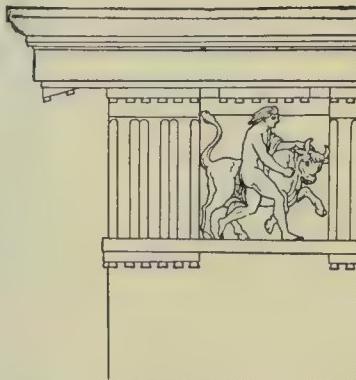
It was not until a year later, at the last great conflict with the Persians on Greek soil, that the Spartan leader turned the tide of battle and won the glory of a signal victory.

The effect of this struggle between Greece and Persia was very important. Success showed the former her real power over the huge but ill-regulated re-

sources of the Eastern World, and encouraged Athens especially to go forward in that race for empire upon which she had now set out. It encouraged also that spirit of independence, freedom, and patriotism which was the one bond of unity between the various states of the peninsula.

Lastly, it made Greece, instead of Persia, the world-state to which men now looked for a lead in politics, trade, and warfare.

During the next fifty years we see Athens moving with rapid strides along the path of empire. She began with a heavy handicap, for the Persians had left the city a mass of smoking ruins, and the Spartans were very anxious to persuade her, when she began to rebuild, that it would be to the advantage of Greece not to fortify the city. But this advice Themistocles defeated by a clever trick. He went to Sparta to discuss the matter, but when he arrived he managed to delay the discussion on the plea that his colleagues had not yet arrived. Meantime, by his orders, the walls rose apace, men, women, and children joining in the work. Whenever the Spartans sent messengers to Athens to see what they were about, and why the other envoys sent before them did not come back, the men were quietly detained within the city. At length the news arrived that the walls of Athens were completed; and then, at last, did Themistocles appear



in the Spartan assembly, declaring that, now the city was provided with walls and could protect her citizens, Sparta must treat her as an equal.

From the city to the port of Peiræus stretched the "Long Walls," giving Athens free access under protection to the open water. It was small wonder that her first ambition was to establish herself as Mistress of the Sea. When the Persians had been driven from the Ægean, the Athenians took their place, first as head of a league of the cities and islands of the sea, then as the centre of an Athenian Empire. At home, under Pericles, Athens was enjoying her Golden Age —a period which is all the more interesting because it marks the supremacy of a republic as opposed to the monarchy still preserved by Sparta.

Under the wise guidance of Pericles the wealth of the city rapidly increased, as the whole of the known world sent its ships to the port of Peiræus. "The fruits of the whole earth flow in upon us," says Pericles, "so that we enjoy the goods of other countries as freely as our own." Yet the pursuit of wealth was a small matter in Athenian eyes compared with the joy of living for its own sake.

The small and often windowless houses suggest that the Greek made use of such places merely for sleep or storage, and that the chief part of his day was spent in the open air or at the gymnasium. If the weather was bad, there were the public arcades



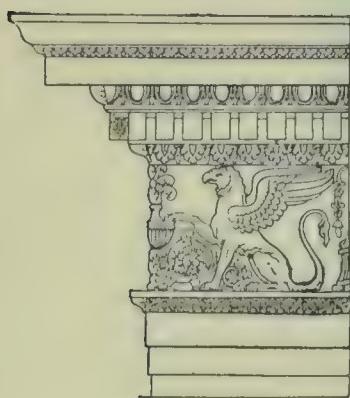
ARISTOTLE, THE FAMOUS GREEK PHILOSOPHER WHO HAS BEEN
CALLED "MASTER OF THEM THAT KNOW."

and porticoes for shelter, where he could meet his friends and chat with them. The schools were generally held out of doors or in some airy porch, and there the boys were taught the literature of their own land, singing, and music. The poems of Homer were their Bibles, and from them they learnt the great lessons of life, so far as they can be learnt from books.

No poverty or want saddened the hearts of these happy Athenians, for the state saw that its citizens were paid a “living wage” in return for whatever kind of work they were best able to perform, and those who were unable to work were cared for at the public expense.

We read in the last chapter that this “Age of Pericles” saw the erection of perhaps the most perfect buildings that the world has ever seen ; and it is the boast of this period of the history of Athens that she made the nearest approach to that ideal of beauty which is the glory of Greece. All her citizens took part in the festivals held in honour of the gods to whom these temples were raised, and many of them shared in the task of building them. Every man, rich and poor, had the right of being present in the vast open-air theatre when the plays of *Æschylus* or *Sophocles* or *Euripides* were performed—plays that are as famous to-day as they were then.

So perfect was the system of laws at Athens that Rome, her future conqueror, sent an embassy in the



Greek Decoration.

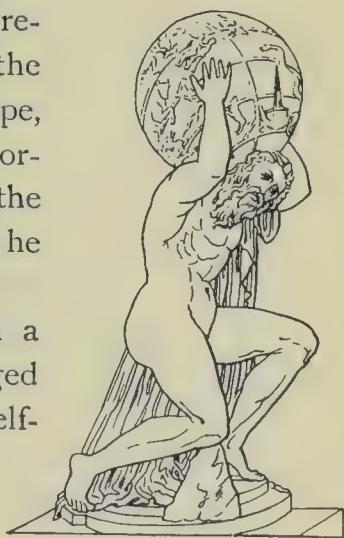
middle of the fifth century to learn from her how to rule the city that was to be Mistress of the World.

It is no wonder, therefore, that the Athenian held in his heart a deep and true love for Athens, the "city of the violet crown," that outward symbol of the beauty which was his abiding ideal.

For fifty years Athens extended her sway over the whole of the Ægean, and over many of the neighbouring states of Greece. During the last twenty-seven years of this period, however, she was engaged in a hand-to-hand struggle for supremacy with Sparta and her allies—a struggle which led to her ultimate ruin.

At the very outset of this contest she had lost her great leader Pericles, of whom, in their usual fashion, her citizens had grown weary. They accused him, with his friend Pheidias the sculptor, of having used the gold set aside for the statue of Athene in the Parthenon for his private purposes. Fortunately the gold had been so laid on that it could easily be removed, and an appeal to the scales soon showed the absurdity of the charge. Yet Pheidias did not escape, for he was next charged with having included portraits of himself and his friend in the frieze of the temple, and for this was thrown into prison, where he died on the eve of his trial.

Meantime Sparta, which had long looked with a jealous eye on the supremacy of Athens, managed to force the latter into such a position that in self-



The Greek Atlas.

defence, as well as in self-respect, Pericles declared war. The overcrowding of the country people, who migrated to Athens in order to escape the ravaging of the enemy, caused a terrible plague in the city. Pericles lost his favourite son, and a little later he lay upon his own death-bed.

"Think of the great benefits you have bestowed upon the city," said his friends in consolation. "These," said the dying maker of Athens, "were partly the result of good fortune, and might have been done by any one. My chief boast is this—never did Athenian have cause to mourn by my fault."

The Peloponnesian War, as it was called, in which the chief adversaries on either side were Sparta and Athens, was really a struggle for empire. We cannot follow here the course of this contest of twenty-seven years, full of exciting adventure and interest though it is. We will only glance at the last event in the struggle which settled the fate of Athens. Partly through the rash ambition of a reckless young noble named Alcibiades, who wasted a great army in a hopeless attempt to make Sicily a part of the Athenian Empire, partly through the terrible mistake of substituting the rule of a handful of tyrannical nobles for their free constitutional government, Athens was almost at her last gasp, when she realized that Sparta was about to make a supreme effort to gain the complete mastery of the *Ægean*.

This was too much for the City of the Sea, and she put all her remaining strength into an attempt to resist the men of Sparta.

One hundred and eighty warships sailed from her harbours and met two hundred of the Spartan vessels in the narrow straits of the Hellespont. But the Spartan Lysander held back his men from the fight, and refused, five times over, the daily challenge of the Athenians. Then the latter, growing careless, left their ships and went ashore to get food, so that when Lysander's fleet came up theirs was almost deserted. There was no need for a battle ; the crews, hastily returning, fell into the Spartans' hands, and were for the most part massacred ; only twenty ships escaped. The Athenian leader dared not court death by carrying the news of such a disaster to the city ; he fled for his life, and sent his dreadful message by the lips of the skipper of the galley *Paralus*.

"It was night," says the Greek historian, "when the *Paralus* reached Athens with the evil tidings, on receipt of which a bitter wail of woe broke forth. From Peiræus, following the line of the Long Walls up to the heart of the city, it swept and swelled, as each man passed the news to his neighbour. That night no man slept. There was mourning and sorrow for those who were lost, but the lamentation for the dead was merged in even deeper sorrow for themselves, as they pictured the evils they were about to suffer."



All too soon these evils came upon Athens. Such was the feeling of rancour and jealousy against her that it was with difficulty she was rescued, by the memory of her exploits at Marathon and Salamis, from utter destruction. In the deepest gloom the inhabitants stood by to see their fair walls demolished, to the music of Peloponnesian flutes, as their enemies celebrated what they considered the triumph of Greek liberty.

But with the fall of Athens was involved the fall of Greece herself. For thirty-three years Sparta kept her hold by sheer brute force on the various states which made up the empire.

Then the city of Thebes broke loose, and brought the supremacy of Sparta to an end by a decisive victory. When this news was brought to Sparta, "it was a striking spectacle," says the Greek writer, "to see those who had relations among the slain moving to and fro in public with bright and radiant looks; while of those whose friends were reported to be living barely a man was to be seen, and these flitted by with lowered heads and scowling brows, as if in humiliation."

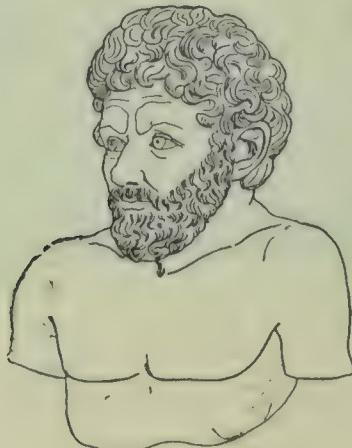
This was but the beginning of a period of disunion and weakness, in which no one state had the strength or tact to draw the rest together. And meantime the young king Philip of Macedon was watching the dying struggle with the keenest interest. It only



APOLLO, THE GREEK GOD OF MUSIC AND POETRY, WITH HIS LYRE.
(From the sculpture in the Vatican.)

needed the request that he would arbitrate between two of the smaller states for him to seize the opportunity for which he longed. He entered Greece with a well-trained army, and only the stirring speeches of their great orator Demosthenes kept the terrified Athenians from offering an alliance. But Demosthenes only delayed the fate of Athens. A few years later Philip was dancing, with the mingled joy and fury of a madman, over the downfall of his opponent after the great victory of Chæronea. Greece was won, and was thereafter to become merely a portion of the Macedonian Empire.

Perhaps no country has laid the Modern World under such a debt of gratitude as Ancient Greece has done. "The Greeks were the first people to show the world what real freedom and real civilization meant. They brought not only politics, but art and science and literature of every kind, to a higher pitch than any other people ever did, without borrowing of others. In all these ways Greece has influenced the world for ever."—(Freeman.)



Aisop, the Fabulist.

Chapter XIII.

THE EMPIRE OF ALEXANDER.

(350-200 B.C.)

WE come now to the turning-point in the history of the empires of the world. We saw how the Eastern World developed and gradually decayed, and how its influence affected in certain ways the more ancient civilizations of the West. Then we saw how a new and energetic Western civilization grew up in Greece on independent lines ; and we shall now see how this became spread, in its turn, over a great part of the dying Eastern World.

Although Greece had to be practically reconquered after his father's death by Alexander, son of Philip of Macedon, that country can scarcely be said to have fallen into the hands of a foreign despot. For Alexander, to all intents and purposes, was himself a Greek by education, by instinct, and by sympathy ; was, moreover, the "flower of the Greek race," in whom was fulfilled all the traditions of Greek heroism.

Beautiful of face, athletic in body, keen and restless in intellect, he might well have been the descendant of the great Achilles, as he himself so eagerly claimed to be. The story of how, as a boy, he tamed the famous horse Bucephalus gives a characteristic glimpse of the future empire-maker. The wild rage of the animal had



scattered all his would-be riders, and the lad Alexander was the only one to see that the fury was mainly due to terror at the sight of the horse's own shadow upon the white marble pavement. Turning him with his back to the sun, the boy quickly succeeded in soothing Bucephalus, and presently led him, trembling and subdued, to his father.

"Seek another kingdom, my son," cried the latter, with tears of joy, "a kingdom that may be worthy of thy abilities, for Macedonia is too small for thee."

From that time the genius that could thus rule a wayward horse was turned to the more difficult task of ruling men.

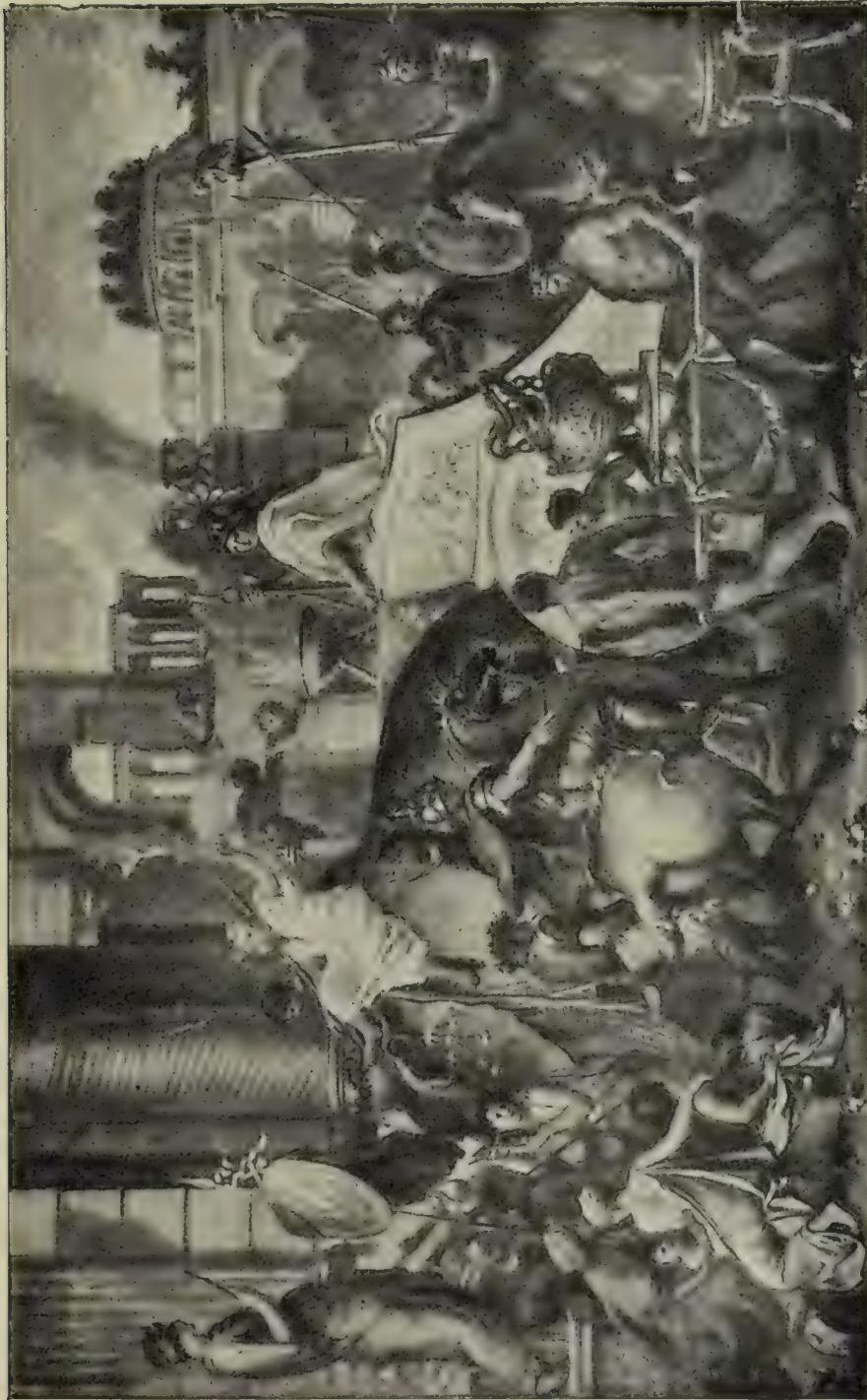
Alexander began this work with one quality at least that leads to success—a strong belief in his own future.

When, after the conquest of Greece, he was about to set forth to subdue Persia, he gave away a great part of his property to his friends.

"But what have you left for yourself?" inquired one of the latter.

"My hopes," answered the young general briefly.

We have seen how, after seven years' hard warfare, Alexander made himself master of the whole of Persia. But he was far-sighted enough to see that if he were to try quite suddenly to impose upon the East the methods of government and of civilization peculiar to the Western World, revolt would be inevitable. So he waited for a chance of gradual introduction,



ALEXANDER ENTERS BABYLON.

(From the painting by Charles le Brun in the Louvre.)

meantime winning the confidence of the conquered nation by marrying an Eastern wife, and living for a while after the gorgeous fashion of a Persian king.

But this not only aroused feelings of jealousy and disgust among his own followers ; it had a demoralizing effect upon the young conqueror himself. A few years earlier, when, during a time of illness, secret news was brought him by letter that his physician was plotting his death by poison, Alexander looked the doctor straight in the face and then drank off the draught presented to him, whilst at the same time handing him the accusing letter. Such confidence was sure to beget loyalty of the most enthusiastic kind ; but now that, with the life and surroundings of an Eastern monarch, Eastern subtlety and suspicion seemed to be affecting his mind, his followers rose to open opposition or sank to secret plotting. One of his closest friends was discovered in a conspiracy, and was promptly put to death, together with the son of the unhappy plotter. A noble Greek philosopher of his following met his death because he would not prostrate himself in Oriental fashion before the king. Saddest of all is the story which tells how, at a banquet, when Alexander, having drunk too much, was bragging wildly about his exploits, a faithful friend, who had once saved his life, rose and bade him cease from his vain and boastful speech. Then Alexander, blind with fury, rushed upon the speaker and killed him with his





The Family of Darius before Alexander.

(From the painting by Paul Veronese in the National Gallery.)

own hand. It was a small thing for a Persian ruler to do, and his Eastern servants were amazed to see their lord prostrate with tears and fasting for two days and nights on the floor of his tent, beside himself with misery at the fatal result of his evil passions.

By the time he had made himself master of Persia, Asia Minor, Palestine, and Phœnicia, Egypt had opened her gates to him, and he was ruler of all the ancient empires of the East. This did not satisfy him, however, for they had been conquered in former days by other hands than his. He turned, therefore, to the unknown world that lay at the "Gate of the Sunrise." With the utmost difficulty he made his way across the Hindu Kush and over the river Indus, encountering desperate resistance from the inhabitants of that region, and would next have marched across India had not his troops, quite exhausted, refused to proceed farther. Reluctant as he was to return, Alexander was wise enough not to press his loyal soldiers beyond endurance. He knew well, indeed, how to earn and keep their loyalty by never shirking danger himself.

On the return journey, when storming the walls of a besieged city, he was the first to mount the ladder set up against them, and by the accidental breaking of the ladder was thrown down alone into the midst of the enemy. A weaker man would have cried for quarter, and made terms even at the sacrifice of his army ; but the young world-conqueror set his back to

the wall and fought a desperate, single-handed fight until a new ladder had been found and his men stood by his side.

His first interest on his return to Babylon, once more the centre of a great empire, was to organize his conquests into one great united whole. He was wise enough to see that this could never be done by force. One of his favourite and most practical schemes was to blend the civilizations of the East and West by making marriages between his Greek and Macedonian followers and the Persian women ; and in this, as we have seen, he set the example by himself wedding the daughter of Darius, the late king.

The young men of the country were encouraged to serve in the royal army, where they were trained in modern methods of warfare. Above all, Alexander made it clear to the dwellers in all parts of his dominions that it was to their advantage to submit themselves to his rule, since only then could they take their share in the great system of world commerce which he had set on foot.

But whilst he was busy planning to conquer new worlds in the far West, the hand of death was laid upon this wonderful young emperor of thirty-three years of age. One night, after he had indulged too freely in feasting and drinking, he was seized with a fever. Within a few days he was dead.

The fact that the unity as well as the extent of his

empire depended upon the personality of Alexander himself is clearly seen in the events that happened immediately after his death. He, for the first time in history, represented universal authority in his own person, and to him every subject of his empire looked as the central figure. But as he left only a half-witted brother and an infant son to succeed him, the various divisions of that empire became the prey of those officers whom he had left in command of each ; and since these men had no right to their dominions save that of the sword, they were constantly obliged to go to war in order to keep their hold against some neighbouring foe, or to prevent the inhabitants from revolting. We will not therefore follow out the story of these years of unrest, but content ourselves with noticing some of the effects of this empire-making at the hands of Alexander the Great.

The first of these was the spread of Greek influence over the Eastern World. Government, laws, sculpture, music, morals, and culture all became attuned to Greek ideals ; and so, although this influence naturally lessened in course of years, we may say with truth that the Oriental World was educated by Greece through Alexander almost as much as the Western World was taught by the Greece which had been the teacher of Alexander himself.

Wherever a new city was founded within the empire, the “aristocracy” of its inhabitants would either be

Greek settlers, or natives who had moulded themselves closely on the Greek pattern ; and as Greek was the one language taught in all the schools, the art and literature and thought of Greece became the property of the foreigner as naturally as it was that of her own children.

The most important city built by the great empire-maker was that of Alexandria, at the mouth of the Nile. This famous town became the home of a university which, for four centuries at least, was the centre of scientific education for the whole of the known world. From all the lands about the Mediterranean students hastened thither to study mathematics and philosophy, and to make use of the immense libraries, museums, and laboratories of the city.

One of the teachers in this university was Euclid, whose text-book on geometry has been in use in the schools of every century and every country up to almost the present time. It was King Ptolemy, the ruler of the kingdom of Egypt after Alexander's death, who came to Euclid and professed himself much interested in the study of geometry ; but when he found what careful and detailed work was involved in the "Elements," he asked scornfully, "Is there no shorter road to the knowledge of this subject?"

"Nay, O king," replied Euclid, gravely, "there is no royal road to geometry."

At another time, one of his pupils, who had managed

with some difficulty to master the first theorem, inquired rudely, "How much better off am I for knowing this?" Then Euclid quietly called a servant and said to him, "Go and give that gentleman half a crown, since he cannot learn without wanting to make money by it."

It was also during these years of unsettlement that Greek influence was showing itself in the realm of art. In one of the cities of Asia Minor was produced the fine sculpture known as the "Dying Gaul," in another the famous "Laocoön;" and to this period belong also the "Venus of Milo," now in the Louvre, and the beautiful "Apollo Belvedere," reproductions of which can be seen either in the South Kensington or in the British Museum.

To Alexander and his empire, then, we owe, besides the spread of Greek civilization, the vigorous growth of Greek thought and art which had been inspired by a wider outlook, a larger world, than that of Athens or of Sparta. And this was to have in after-days an immense influence on a nation, hitherto of small importance, but soon to make herself mistress of an empire beside which that of Alexander sinks into comparative insignificance.

Chapter XIV.

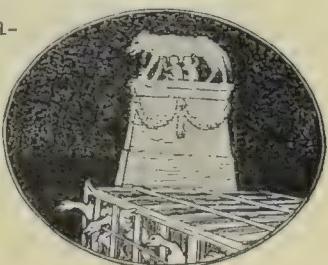
THE MAKING OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE.

(753-44 B.C.)

THE beginnings of Rome, like those of all other countries of the Ancient World, belong to the Age of Myths, though most of the stories concerning the infancy of the various nations contain some germs of truth.

The story which is concerned with the very earliest period of all tells how the Trojan prince Æneas, after the siege of Troy, was driven by stress of sea storms on to the coast of Italy, where he founded a city for his son Ascanius on the slope of the Alban Hills.

The sequel to this story tells us that the descendants of this same Æneas, twin babes called Romulus and Remus, said to be the sons of the god Mars, were thrown into the Tiber by their wicked uncle, who then usurped the throne. But the river would not drown the children, and cast them upon an islet, where they were nursed by a she-wolf. There they were found by the keeper of the royal herd, who took them to his home and brought them up as his children. When they had grown to be lusty youths they discovered the secret of their origin, and having killed their uncle, proceeded to found a city. But first they had to decide where the founda-



tions should be laid, and this must be settled by a sign sent by the gods. So Romulus took his station on one hill, Remus on another, and watched for the flight of birds by which the will of the gods was to be made known. First Romulus saw six birds, and was hastening to tell his brother and claim his rights as founder, when Remus met him with the news that he had seen twelve birds a few moments later. A quarrel arose as to which was the better omen ; high words ensued ; Romulus killed Remus, and became founder of the city and first of seven kings, under whom Rome increased steadily in size and importance.

So runs the legend of the founding of the city, and in it is certainly to be found this grain of truth :—

There existed in Italy, just as there did in Greece, a very ancient civilization known as that of the Etruscans. These people lived in the valleys between the rivers Po and Tiber, visited Sardinia and Corsica, and came into touch with the Egyptians, the Phœnicians, and the Greeks. This fact is the origin of the legend which makes *Æneas*, the representative of Eastern culture, take up his abode on Italian soil. Gradually these Etruscans had increased in wealth and prosperity under the influence of the Greek settlers, who by this time had made their homes in Southern Italy (800-600 B.C.). From them they learnt the Phœnician alphabet, the Greek religion,

and the outlines of Greek art; for many Greek and Egyptian vases have been dug up from Etruscan graves.

Meantime there had settled in the well-watered valley of the Tiber, on the borders of the Etruscan territory, a little band of shepherds, probably wanderers from the Alban Hills, led possibly by one of the name of Romulus, which simply means "the man from the tower on the river." These would "found" their village-city with some such ceremony as was already in common use among their powerful Etruscan neighbours. A round hole would be dug, in which were placed the fruits of the season, upon which each man present scattered a handful of earth. Over this was set up a stone on which a fire was lighted—the central hearthstone of the new city. Then a white bull and a white cow were harnessed to a brazen ploughshare, and with this the founder—the chieftain of the little band—traced out the foundations of the walls, lifting the ploughshare at the place where the gates were to be, and taking care that each line of broken sods should turn inward towards the city. Then he would stand and pray aloud to the gods, saying, "May the duration of this work of mine be long. May its sway be that of a long-lived land, and under it may there be both the setting and the rising of the day."

Such was probably the humble origin of Rome, the Mother of Cities.

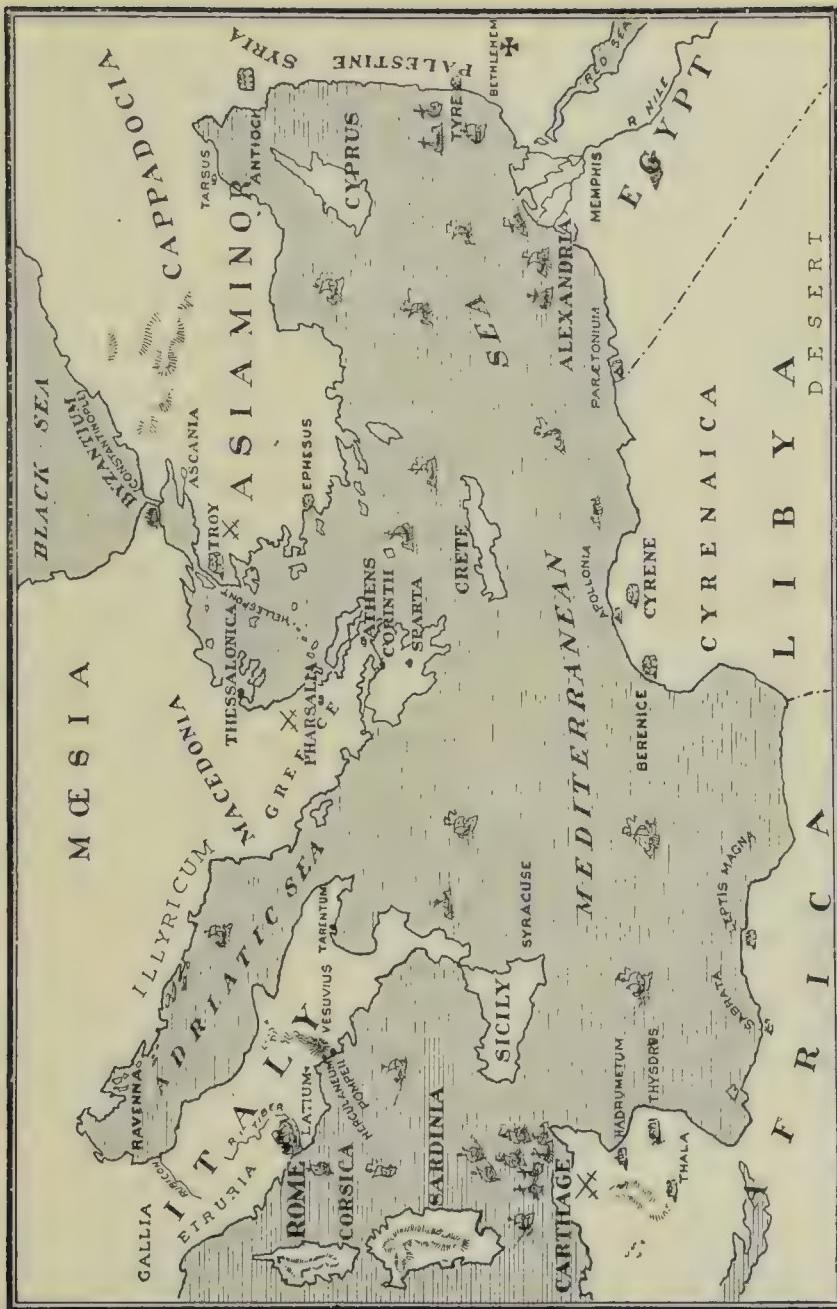


Gradually her population increased as traders recognized the advantages of her position near the mouth of a river, as fugitive outlaws from neighbouring quarters made the city their refuge, or as other shepherds flocked in to find protection from the wild men of the adjacent hill country.

Soon a distinction began to be drawn between the original makers of the city and their descendants—the Patricians—and the newcomers, or mass of the people—the Plebeians.

But Rome remained for many years merely a city-state of the district of Latium, and it was not until she fell under the sway of her Etruscan neighbours that she began to take any prominent position in the league of the towns of that district. Her civilization came to her from her Etruscan conquerors; and since they, as we have seen, had been very largely under the influence of Greece, we have here a strong connection between Rome and the older empires of the Eastern World, a connection that was to be drawn still more close in later years.

Under the rule of the Etruscan kings, or chieftains, the real building of Rome began. A splendid drainage system relieved the city of the unhealthy marshes that lay among her seven hills. Temples were built, bridges spanned the river, the buildings of the great Forum or market-place arose, and a new wall was erected around the city, which had now



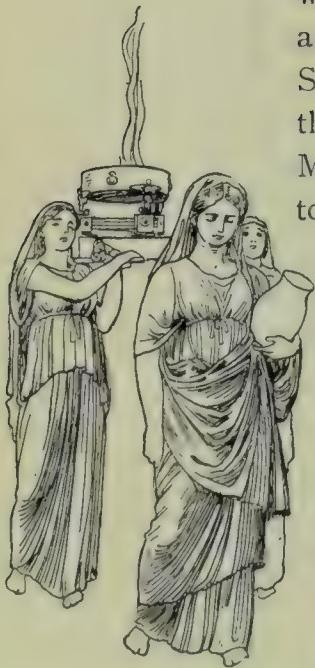
MAP OF THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN.

attained the size which it retains to this day. Etruscan culture took the place of primitive custom ; and instead of a Nature-worship which peopled the farm, the wood, the river, and the sea with its own peculiar spirits of good and evil, the Romans began to develop a definite system of gods and goddesses, borrowed through the Etruscans from the Greeks, yet differing from the religion of the latter in certain marked ways.

Thus, as we should expect in a people who were obliged to defend themselves from the first against warlike neighbours on either hand, the god Mars plays a prominent part in Roman worship ; and Jupiter, "the Sky-god," is a more irascible and hot-headed deity than the genial Zeus of Greece, "the Father of Gods and Men." The Romans have their own special deities, too, such as Janus, "the Spirit of the Doorway ;"

Vesta, "the Guardian of the Hearth ;" and the Lares and Penates, household gods, the former being the spirits of bygone ancestors, the latter the guardians of the daily food.

Thus the Roman mingled his religion with his ordinary life, and, especially after the period of Etruscan influence, would undertake no important work without first consulting the will of the gods by means of "omens." Sometimes these were taken from natural occurrences—the flight of birds, an eclipse of the moon, a thunderstorm. At other times they would consult the famous Sibylline books.



Vestal Virgins.

of which the story runs that the sibyl, or wise woman, brought nine of them to the last of the Roman kings and offered to sell them at a high price. The king refused, whereupon she burnt three and offered the rest for twice the sum named at first. Again he refused, and again she burnt three and offered the remaining ones for double the original sum. Then the king, struck with her persistence, agreed to buy the three books, and from henceforth these became the precious possession of the State, and were consulted at all important points of her early history.

In all their methods of worship and of consultation of the gods we can trace one main idea, that of submission to authority, an idea which went far to form the character of every Roman citizen.

While the Greek ideal was beauty, that of the Roman was "citizenship." "Be a good citizen," was the first teaching given by the Roman mother to her little sons, and for this purpose men were wont to train themselves in firmness, self-control, and self-sacrifice. It was this very pride in the Roman birth-right that made St. Paul, in the first century after Christ, ask with calm certainty of "the centurion that stood by," "Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?" and that caused the "chief captain" to ask in trepidation, "Tell me, art thou a Roman?" Said the captain with awe, when he had heard the answer, "With a great sum

obtained I this freedom." And St. Paul shows in his answer the quiet but concentrated pride of centuries of Roman greatness as he makes reply, "*But I was free born.*" It was that same intense sentiment of patriotism that, six centuries before, made Brutus, the first Consul, condemn his two beloved sons to death because they had joined in a plot against the freedom of the city, and that was the motive of the countless deeds of heroism and self-sacrifice that make up the best part of the history of Rome.

From the earliest days the growing city seems to have had a definite form of government, in which much power was evidently in the hands of the people. The king was elected by them, and their right of interference with his decree is seen in the story of the Horatii and Curatii:—



Three brothers of the clan of Horatius challenged three of the clan of Curatius, in order to settle a war that had broken out between the Albans and the Romans. Two were killed on either side, and then the remaining Horatius managed to kill the surviving Curatius. But when the young victor returned in triumph to Rome, he met his sister, who was betrothed to the dead Curatius, and who burst into tears of reproach at the sight of the spoils he was carrying. He struck her lifeless to the ground, and was in his turn doomed to death for his act by the word of the

king. But Horatius "appealed" to the people, who met in their own court, and declared him free of the punishment decreed because he had "done well to the city."

The result of this free tendency was inevitable. Gradually the power of the king was lessened, until at length his office was abolished altogether, and two consuls took his place at the head of that Republican form of government which was so dear to Roman hearts for the next five centuries.

Scarcely was the new-built city settled firmly on her own foundations than she found herself obliged to fight for her position among the other towns of Latium.

It was not for nothing that the Romans claimed to be descended from Mars, "the God of War." Their great historian Livy may well say of them: 'If there *is* a people in the world who can claim Mars for its founder and forefather, it is certainly the people of Rome, who, exchanging the shepherd's staff for the warrior's sword, have subjected the whole world to their rule.'

If we take the word "empire," then, to mean a state which is made by the supremacy of one city or state over several others, we may say that Rome began her empire-making at the beginning of the fifth century before Christ, in the first days of her Republic.

During the next three centuries we see her busily engaged in defence against her neighbours, in the





conquest of Italy, and then in a struggle with Carthage in the regions of the Western Mediterranean, from which she emerges, no longer a mere city of Latium but an imperial state, ruler of the Western Seas, and more than prepared for a conflict that was to bring the East under her control.

While Rome was struggling first to hold her own amongst her neighbours, and then to conquer them, the mass of her population, the plebeians, were suffering from cruel laws of debt which often forced them to sell themselves to their creditors, as well as to suffer from lack of all privileges claimed by citizens. Yet, as the fighting-men of the city, it was on them that the safety of Rome depended. The sight of one of their number, who had fought and bled for Rome, being carried to a noisome prison cell because he could not pay his debts, roused the people to revolt. When next the call to arms was heard, the plebeians retired to the sacred mount outside the city, and refused to strike a blow against the enemy till they had gained full rights as citizens.

By such means as these they obtained, first, their "tribunes," officers elected from their own ranks, who had the power of forbidding an unrighteous law to pass through the Roman Parliament or Senate; then a code of laws, borrowed mainly from Greece; and later a well-organized system of officers and magistrates.

Before this struggle had come to any satisfactory end



THE GAULS AND THE SENATOR.

(From the painting by Maccari in the Senate House, Rome.)

a blow fell upon Rome which threatened to destroy both parties at once. From the mountains of North Italy the wild and warlike race of the Gauls swooped down upon the city, from which the plebeians fled in panic to a neighbouring town. A band of patricians held out in the citadel called the Capitol, which was protected by its steep and rocky position ; in the Senate House below, the old senators of the city awaited the foe in solemn state.



So still sat these old men that the Gauls took them for statues, and stretched out their foul hands to stroke a long white beard and folded robe. But the proud Roman statesman struck the rude foreigner to the ground, and the act was a signal for general massacre.

For a while the Capitol held out, saved against a midnight attack by the warning cackle of geese and the ready pluck of Manlius, who threw the leader of the expedition down the steep ascent on top of his comrades. And meantime the Gauls, having burnt the city to the ground, were anxious to return to their mountain homes. An arrangement was made by which they agreed to retire on payment of a sum of gold ; but in after years, to cover such a disgrace to Roman valour, the story went that their brave general Camillus, exiled by their jealous ill-will in former days, appeared upon the scene in time to fling his sword into the scales in which the money

was being weighed, crying, "With iron, not gold, shall the Roman debt be paid." Then falling upon the foe, it is said, he drove them from the city.

Rome was left by the Gauls a heap of smoking ruins ; but though she was not the only city to suffer from the attacks of the Northerners, she was the first to rise, purified by fire, from the ashes of the past. Within the next century and a half she had extended her dominion north and south, and secured it by means of colonies built as outposts along the straight, well-made roads which led from all parts of Italy to Rome. Her conquest of the extreme south, Greek Italy as it was called, brought her into direct touch with Macedon, and hence, to some degree, with Greece.

The people of Tarentum, in Southern Italy, had bound the Romans by a treaty not to enter their waters, and finding them regardless of their pledges, proceeded to sink four of their vessels which were sailing near their coasts. To inquire the meaning of this came a Roman ambassador, who arrived during a festival when the Tarentines were full of wine. He tried to speak to them in Greek, but they jeered at his pronunciation and grammar, and when he went on, unmoved, a drunken fellow threw a handful of dirt upon his white toga.

"We accept the omen," cried the Roman. "You shall give us even more than we ask of you."

A roar of offensive laughter followed this remark,





The Departure of Regulus for Carthage.

(From the painting by Maccari in Rome.

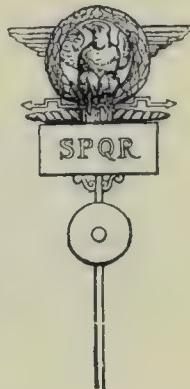
Photo by Alinari.)

which fell away into silence as the ambassador said grimly, "Laugh on while ye may ; ye shall weep long enough hereafter, for the stain on this toga shall be washed out in your blood."

In such a spirit was begun a war which ended in Rome becoming the mistress of the whole of Italy south of the river Po.

The lazy Tarentines asked for the aid of Pyrrhus, who had made himself master of Macedon some years after the death of Alexander the Great. He was a renowned man of warfare, and his troop of elephants was an unwelcome novelty to the Romans, who thought the animals to be some new kind of oxen ; but even in their first defeat the men of Rome had shown their mettle to such effect that Pyrrhus declared that with such soldiers he could conquer the world. In the end the Romans held their own, and Pyrrhus went back to spread the news of their prowess in a country that was to fall, before many years were over, into their hands.

Within the next century the bond between Greece and Rome had been drawn so much closer that Roman ambassadors were allowed to witness the famous Isthmian games at Corinth, and Rome had become so impressed by the superiority of Greek culture that the language of that people was taught in every school, and even the historians of the period wrote in it. For some sixty years the struggle with Carthage kept Rome occupied ; but no sooner had



she made herself mistress of the Western Mediterranean than she turned her eyes longingly to the Land of Beautiful Ideals.



Alas for the treasures of Greece! No sooner had Rome completed the task of conquest than the work of conveying her fair statues and carvings to Italy was entrusted to a rough soldier, who knew so little of their value that he told his men that if they broke or mutilated anything they would have to replace it!

Some years after Rome had made herself mistress of Greece and of the greater part of Asia Minor a new struggle began within the city itself between the rich and the poor. The old distinction between patricians and plebeians had passed away, and the contrast was now drawn between the wealthy in their luxurious ease, and the starving poor who begged for bread at their doors.

Something was wrong with an empire whose very heart was beset with these unhappy unemployed, whilst the country around lay waste for lack of labour, or because the rich found it more profitable to keep it as grass-land for sheep-rearing. So at length two brothers, Tiberius and Caius Gracchus, sons of the noble Roman matron Cornelia, stood forth to champion the people's cause.

Tiberius, the elder, aimed chiefly at getting the "public land," claimed hitherto by the nobles, divided amongst all citizens alike. By this he earned the hatred of the aristocrats, who did their best to persuade

the ignorant folk, in whose cause he was fighting, that all was to be done for his own benefit.

Taking advantage of a chance action of Tiberius in the midst of a riotous crowd they raised the cry. "See! he aims at a crown!" He had but touched his head as a sign that his enemies would destroy him if they could, but that was enough for them. In the rush that followed he was killed.

Then his brother Caius took his place after a period of honourable service in the army abroad. On pretence that he was dangerous to the city, the senators would have expelled him, but he faced them with the words—

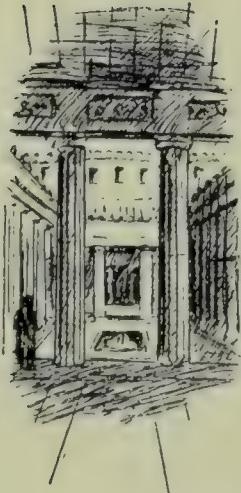
"I have served twelve campaigns when I only need have served ten. The purse I carried with me full has come back empty; yet I know men who carried out barrels full of wine, and brought them back full of gold and silver."

So for very shame they had to let him stay. But his enemies would not give him a chance of carrying out his reforms. They opposed his plan of forming a colony at Carthage to which might be drafted the surplus population of Rome, and seized upon a trivial excuse to declare him a public enemy. Hopeless of escape, Caius Gracchus killed himself in a grove on the bank of the Tiber, and all chance of Rome's reformation from within was for a while at an end.

The time was now ripe for the "one man rule," which, though entirely opposed to the Roman prin-

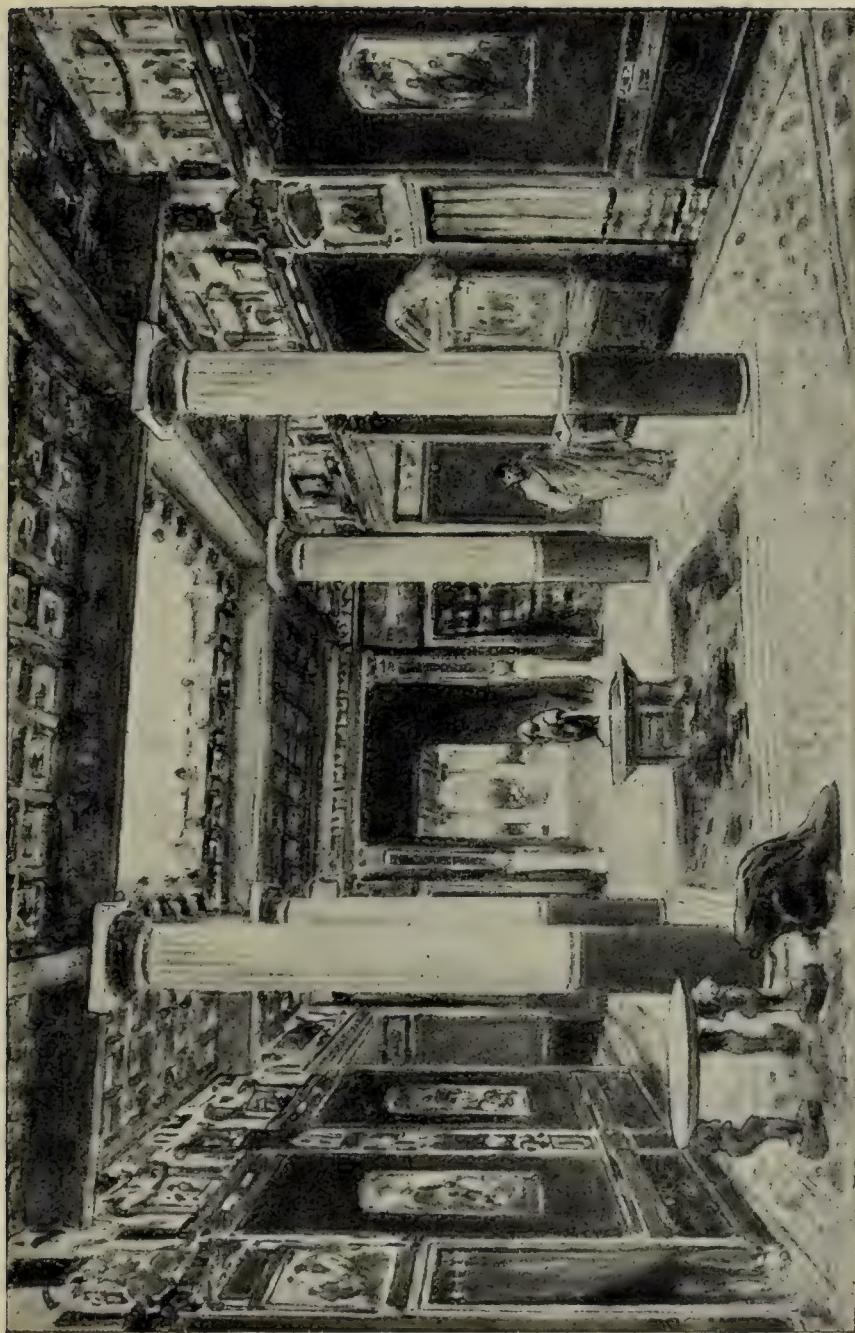
ciples of government, was the only resource in this unsettled state of affairs.

Before we read how Rome became a world-empire let us glance for a moment at the way of life of a private citizen in this earlier period of her development.



His house consisted originally of one room, the *atrium*, or "dark chamber," so called possibly because the walls and roof were stained by the smoke that rose from the box of coals upon the hearth. In the centre of the roof a hole let in the light and the rain, which fell into a hollow in the floor below. In time this one-roomed house was much enlarged. We should make our entrance through an *ostium*, or "entrance-hall," over a threshold on which, for fear of ill-luck, we must be careful not to set the left foot first. Beyond the *atrium* we should find the bed-chambers, and probably a dining-room, called the *triclinium*, furnished with three long couches and a table. At meals the Romans lay on these couches, resting on the left elbow and using the right hand, the head of each lying near the breast of his neighbour. In the houses of the wealthy an open courtyard, surrounded by pillars, and containing a fountain, would often be found in the centre of the house, and after Greek learning became the fashion, a "book-room" was set apart; while even in the houses of the middle-class folk a bathroom was an absolute necessity.

The Roman lived much on porridge and on wheaten



THE ATRIUM OF A HOUSE IN POMPEII (RESTORED).

or barley bread baked in flat round cakes, and eaten with olive-oil, cheese, or honey. He was fond of pork, especially in the form of sausages, and ate vegetables and fruit at most of his meals.

When a marriage was celebrated, the bridegroom would pretend to drag the bride from her mother's arms, and she was then conducted to her new home carrying a spindle and distaff in her hand. She was lifted over the doorstep in case she should slip her foot, and in her honour the fire was lit and water sprinkled, after which she was solemnly presented with the keys of the house. From henceforth she was a person of great importance, holding a position far higher than that of a woman in any other part of the Ancient World. She was given an honoured place at public entertainments, she had the training of her children, the management of her house, and her share in religious festivals.

Roman boys were sent to private schools when they were seven years old. They were taught their letters from wooden blocks much like those of our own kindergartens, and learnt to write on tablets covered with thin wax, which they scratched with a pen or *stylus* flattened at one end so that they could readily smooth over the wax again when necessary.

Reading, writing, and arithmetic were the chief subjects of study for the Roman schoolboy, who also learnt to know the smart of the cane. In the earlier period his only text-book was that containing the

"laws of the twelve tables," which every boy had to know by heart. His favourite game was played with knuckle-bones, which were thrown into the air and caught on the back of the hand. Another game played by Romans of all ages was much like our draughts, and was borrowed from the Greeks.

Later, when Greek culture had captured Rome, a translation of Homer into Latin became the chief text-book in the schools, and the elder boys were educated in the higher forms of Greek learning.

When the Roman died, those standing round his death-bed sighed, "*Vale!*" (farewell!), and placed a coin upon his mouth wherewith to pay Charon, the ferryman of the dead, who bears the departed across the river Styx into Hades. Then men in masks carried the body through the doorway wreathed with cypress, and were followed by the freed slaves of the citizen, hired mourners, and actors, one of whom, as he went, gave an imitation of the voice and gestures of the dead.

Gradually, as the days of the republic neared their end, much that was simple and upright and noble in the life and character of the Roman citizen gave way to a greed for money and a love of luxury which were partly the result of a foolish imitation of Greek ideals, and partly due to a changing and disorganized state of public affairs. We shall now go on to see how the republic came to an end, and what kind of life was lived in Rome under the empire.

Chapter XV.

ROME AS A WORLD EMPIRE.

(44 B.C.-40 A.D.)

WHEN Rome had fallen into a condition of civil war at home and almost perpetual fighting for an empire abroad, it was not a difficult matter to convince the citizens that a vigorous rule could only be established by handing over the chief power to one man instead of to many, as in the days of the republic.

It only needed a fine general like Marius to win the admiration of the army, and the thing was almost done. Marius became the leader of one strong party, and for a while held the upper hand. Then his rival, Sulla, drove him from power, and took the title of "Perpetual Dictator," in an office which differed very little from that of king. After his death two men stepped forward upon the stage of Roman history, both of whom did much to prepare the way for the fall of the republican form of government.

Pompey, whom men called in later days the "Great," was a magnificent general, and one who hoped to hold sway over the people merely by dint of making himself a successful conqueror. When the Eastern Mediterranean was beset by pirates, and Asia Minor torn by internal wars, it was Pompey who, in a wonderfully brief time, swept away the nests of robbers, and reduced

the East as far as the river Euphrates to a state of subjection.

On his return to Rome, the cold and critical attitude of the Senate, fearful and jealous of his success, threw Pompey into an alliance with his friend Julius Cæsar, and it was arranged between them that the two should rule respectively for the next few years over the provinces of Spain and Gaul. But while Cæsar was absent fighting for Gaul, and winning the deepest affection and admiration of his soldiers, Pompey lingered in Rome, and ere long began to play a very false game with his ally.

When Cæsar, who had won many victories in his province, turned his face towards Rome once more, he discovered that Pompey, his faithless friend, had declared himself "Sole Consul," and had caused the Senate to make a decree ordering Cæsar to disband his army and to remain in Gaul as a private person, without any authority whatever. To refuse was to defy the Roman state; to obey was to sink into obscurity for ever. All night long Cæsar pondered the matter as he waited on the banks of the Rubicon, the river that separated Gaul * from Italy; but as the dawn broke, crying, "The die is cast!" he crossed the stream, and entered Italy at the head of his host.

Terrified at the news of his approach, Pompey fled to Greece, whither Cæsar, after having secured his position at Rome, quickly followed him. There he met

* That is, Gallia Cisalpina, or Gaul to the south of the Alps.

his old ally face to face in the battle of Pharsalia, from whence Pompey, a wretched fugitive, hastened to take refuge in Egypt. But as he set foot on the Egyptian strand he was stabbed by order of the king of that country, and fell dead upon the shore.

Cæsar was now the undoubted master of the Roman world, the face of which, during the four years of his government, he was to change in a very remarkable way. Let us see what manner of man he was from the words of one of his biographers : " His lofty stature and finely-moulded limbs gave to his person a peculiar grace. His eyes were dark, his glance penetrating, his complexion pale, and his nose straight and somewhat thick. His voice was sonorous and vibrating, his gesture noble, and an air of dignity pervaded his whole person. His frame, delicate in early years, grew robust by sober living and by his habit of exposing himself to all weathers. He was a bold horseman, and supported with ease privations and fatigues."

This remarkable man, whom we can only compare with Alexander of Macedon among the great ones of the Ancient World, had already conquered Gaul in such a way that the natives were able to realize that submission to the Roman power was to them of immense advantage. He had also visited Britain on two occasions, and prepared the way to some extent for a future conquest by stirring up the interest of the Romans in these islands of the sea.



A Gallic Chieftain in Chains.



"FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH" (THE SOLDIER AT THE GATE OF POMPEII).

(From the painting in the Walker Art Gallery by Sir E. J. Poynter, R.A.

By permission of the Corporation of Liverpool.)

In the book in which he describes his wars he says that he found Britain "well peopled, full of houses and cattle. The people use brass money and iron rings of a certain weight. The provinces inland produce tin, and those on the coast iron, but in no great quantity.



All kinds of wood grow here except the fir and beech tree.....The greater part of the people never sow their lands, but live on flesh and milk, and go clad in skins. All the Britons in general paint themselves with woad, which gives a bluish look to the skin and makes them look terrible in battle."

But the conquest of Britain was reserved for the future, for, as we have seen, Cæsar was obliged to hasten back to uphold his cause in Rome. Four

years of fighting after his return had made Rome supreme in the province of Africa, in Spain, and in the East, and had given her a certain amount of authority in Egypt; and in the intervals of warfare Cæsar, as sole consul, was busy in reforming the condition of Rome herself. He found the city unsettled, poverty-stricken and luxurious at the same time, and ripe for revolution. In an incredibly short time he had reduced it to a state of peace and prosperity. Those who could find no work were encouraged to emigrate, slavery was much decreased, and law and order were enforced throughout the country. The calendar was reformed, and one of the months—July—named after the great consul; while many great public buildings were planned.

But of more importance than any of these, perhaps, was the determined effort of Cæsar to unite the scattered provinces of the empire into one great whole, which should look to Rome not as its sovereign so much as its central point, its heart, on which the security of its existence depended. This was the reason why he combined in himself all the highest offices of state, a position summed up by him in the title "Imperator," or Emperor, which signified in those days only the status of commander-in-chief of the army. He was now, in point of fact, an absolute king in all but name, and it was inevitable that this should cause searching doubts in the minds of those who gloried in the old republic, as well as jealousy amongst those who had looked in vain to share his power.

These two parties were represented respectively by Brutus, a near friend of Cæsar, who, like his great ancestor, the first consul, put patriotism above every other sentiment on earth; and by Cassius, who seems to have been moved by a personal dislike of the great ruler of Rome.

These two men found little difficulty in stirring up a plot against the consul. They pointed out the fact that he no longer courted popularity, but would even write letters or read a book when he was present at the theatre or the circus, as though he were not concerned with the people's pleasures. They showed how he was already arranging that his office should descend

at his death to his adopted son and nephew, Octavius, as a monarch would have done. Only about seventy, however, were actually concerned in the plot, and some of these must have been half-hearted, for Cæsar had many warnings of danger before the appointed day arrived.

A wise man, or soothsayer, bade him "Beware the Ides of March;" many evil omens were reported; and his wife Calpurnia had such bad dreams as to what was to occur on that date that Cæsar at length decided not to go as usual to the Senate House. But one of the conspirators came to fetch him, and persuaded him with wily words, so that he at length set out. Even then he might have been saved had he read the warning lines held out to him by one who seemed to offer a petition. This, however, he put aside, saying with a smile as he saw the soothsayer among the crowd, "The Ides of March are come!" "Ay, Cæsar, but not gone," replied that voice of ill-omen, as the great man ascended the steps of the Senate House. Then, as he took his seat, the conspirators surrounded him, pretending to offer a petition for the recall of one who had been banished. Even as he refused, they struck him with their daggers, and he, while preparing to defend himself, had but to see the uplifted weapon of Brutus, his friend, to lose all heart. "You too, Brutus!" he cried, and covering his face with his robe, fell dead upon the ground.

The value of the work of Julius Cæsar as an empire-builder can scarcely be exaggerated. "He found the

world of his day, consisting of disordered elements of strength all at strife with each other, in a central turmoil, skirted and surrounded by the relative peace of an ancient and long undisturbed barbarism. It was out of these elements that he created what has become modern Europe, and the direction which he gave to the evolution of mankind has never wholly changed since his day. Of all great conquerors he was the least cruel, for he never sacrificed human life without the direct intention of benefiting mankind by an increased social stability. Of all great lawgivers he was the most wise and just, and the truths he set down in the Julian Code are the foundation of modern justice. Of all great men who have leaped upon the world as upon an unbroken horse, who have guided it with relentless hands, and ridden it breathless to the goal of glory, Cæsar is the only one who turned the race into the track of civilization, and, dying, left mankind a future in the memory of his past. We cannot take him away and yet leave anything of what we have."—(*F. M. Crawford.*)

In the midst of the confusion that followed the death of Cæsar, his nephew Octavius came slowly but surely to the front, and twelve years after the tragedy of which we have just read had made himself the sole master of Rome. At that time he had been a mere boy of eighteen, but he had managed, together with Mark Antony, Cæsar's firmest supporter, to get together an army large enough to defeat that of Brutus at

Philippi. Brutus himself might have escaped, but he had become disheartened and unnerved by the remembrance of the part he had felt himself obliged to play in Cæsar's death, and knowing that the days of the republic were numbered, he fell upon his own sword, and so died. His character is thus summed up in the words of Shakespeare:—



“ This was the noblest Roman of them all.
All the conspirators, save only he,
Did what they did in envy of great Cæsar.
He only in a general honest thought
And common good to all made one of them.
His life was noble, and the elements so mixed in him
That Nature might stand up and say to all the world,
‘This was a man.’ ”

It was during the reign of Octavius—or, as he came to be known, Augustus Cæsar—that the Empire of Rome reached its greatest height. One of his early achievements was to add to that empire the kingdom of Egypt, one of the oldest monarchies in the world. It had been ruled by Cleopatra, that beautiful and wicked queen who had managed to get under her influence the weak Mark Antony when he, for a time, was sharing the chief power with Augustus after Cæsar's death. In her hands the once witty orator and clever soldier became so degraded that he wept with annoyance when he failed to catch as many fish as she did in the royal lake, and failed to feel ashamed when she, to tease him, sent a diver to put a fish upon his hook, which turned out to be *salted*. When Augustus had

Mount Vesuvius, which destroyed the cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum in 79 A.D.



utterly defeated the worthless Antony, Cleopatra, after trying her wiles in vain on the young emperor, allowed an asp to bite her neck, and so died. Tennyson makes her say :—

“ I died a queen. The Roman soldier found
Me lying dead, my crown about my brows,
A name for ever ! lying robed and crowned,
Worthy a Roman spouse.”

At Antony's death Augustus found himself ruler of an empire that stretched in Europe from the river Rhine to the Danube, excluding the land of the Germans, the future empire-makers of the world ; in Asia to the river Euphrates and the borders of Syria ; in Africa to the edge of the Sahara Desert. It was therefore the greatest in extent that the ancient world had known. In his days we may place the Golden Age of Rome, when, as the poet Horace says, “ the ox plods up and down the fields in safety ; our sailors speed over seas freed from pirates ; crime is checked ;and each man closes a peaceful day upon his native hills.”

It is rather curious to find that though Augustus was the undoubted and sole ruler of this vast empire, and thus was in the modern sense a real “ emperor,” he himself made it his proudest boast that he had restored the republic. He wore the clothes and lived the life of an ordinary citizen ; any person could come and speak to him when he liked ; and he went about with only the attendance usual for a magistrate. In



these ways he completely won the confidence of his people. His great wish was to bring them back to the "simple life of duty to the gods and service to the state," and in this he succeeded to a very large extent.

In his time art and literature flourished exceedingly, so that the name of the period, "the Augustan Age," has been applied ever since to a time of fine literary production. The poet Virgil, in his great epic poem the "*Aeneid*," sang the story of early Rome; the historian Livy told her history; and the poet Horace glorified the age in which he lived in charming verse.

Beautiful buildings arose in Rome. The marble temple of Apollo, filled with exquisite statues, was the emperor's gift to the city, and his great men hastened to follow his example. Well might Augustus with pride declare, "I found Rome a city of brick; I leave it a city of marble."

But perhaps the most honourable record of this great empire-maker is found in the following words of Augustus himself: "When I was administering my thirteenth consulship, the Senate and the Roman people with one consent greeted me with the title of FATHER OF MY COUNTRY, and decreed that it should be inscribed on the vestibule of my house, and in the Senate House and in the Forum, and underneath the chariot which was there placed in my honour."

It was during the reign of this great emperor that, in a distant and obscure part of his empire, the birth

took place of that Divine Child who was to change the face of the whole world. Augustus knew nothing of it any more than his successor, Tiberius, knew of Christ's wonderful life and death and resurrection. But some at least of the followers whom He left to carry on His work on earth made it their business to carry the gospel news to Rome, the heart of the empire. There St. Paul laid down his life in the reign of the Emperor Nero, and probably St. Peter also. And there, at a time when the Romans had to a large extent given up their faith in the old gods, the seed of the Christian Church began to be sown in the hearts of some of the citizens, and in time was scattered little by little over the rest of the empire. Christianity is said to have been brought to far-off Britain by Roman soldiers serving under Claudius, by whom much of the island was brought under Roman sway.



It was at Rome, too, that the most bitter persecution of these early Christians took place. The Emperor Nero, a cruel madman, once had a number of them covered with pitch and set alight to form living torches for his garden party. Sometimes they were made to fight as gladiators, or were thrown to the lions, in the arena of the great Coliseum, before the eyes of thousands of men and women. In spite of all this, however, the Christian Church rapidly increased, while the Empire of Rome was already beginning to decline.

Chapter XVI.

THE DECLINE OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE (40-476 A.D.)

HAD Rome kept up her old superstitions, she might have seen in an event that occurred sixty-five years after the death of Augustus an omen of her coming downfall. Beneath the shadow of Vesuvius, on the borders of the beautiful Bay of Naples, the two cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum flourished in the midst of wealth, and luxury, and careless ease. Within a few hours those cities were buried in the lava that streamed from the crater of the mountain, and the whole population perished.

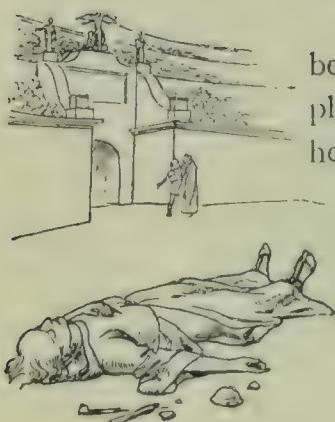
Eighteen hundred years later the cities were dug out of their long, long sleep, and to-day, by studying their condition, we obtain a perfect picture of life in the Roman world in the days of the Emperor Titus.

Thus we may see the skeleton of a Roman soldier standing at his post, and the exact impress in the lava of the form of a young girl as she had flung herself in her panic on the ground. Upon the walls we see the caricatures and rough drawings made by the Roman street-boys. Here is a cook arrested in the very act of putting a saucepan upon the fire ; there an unfinished column with the tool lying ready to hand, or a banquet half eaten. An excellent idea of the actual life of the

place just before its destruction can be obtained from the pages of Lytton's "Last Days of Pompeii."

The Romans disregarded the warning, however, if such it was, and the state, under a series of weak or unprincipled emperors, sank lower and lower. Luxury and evil living had long ago taken the place of the simple life which Augustus had encouraged. The Cæsars lived in palaces of enormous size; they sat on thrones of gold; they supped on peacocks' tongues and nightingales, and melted pearls in order that their drink might be of priceless value. Here and there we have an exceptional period, such as that in the second century, when the head of the state was such a man as Hadrian, one of the few emperors who cared to make himself personally acquainted with his empire. He it was who came to our own land and superintended the building of the great wall made to defend Southern Britain from the furious attacks of the natives of the north. "The Roman world was his pride and joy; he left it happier and stronger than it had ever been before."

One of his successors, Marcus Aurelius, has left behind him a name, not as a conqueror, but as a philosopher. Full of high ideals of life and conduct, he lived a life of poverty and self-discipline in order to fit his mind for the lofty meditations given to the world in what is known as his "Golden Book." To this period belong the famous Trajan's Column at Rome, the magnificent Temple of Venus built by





“AVE, CÆSAR, MORITURI TE SALUTAMUS!”
(From the picture by J. L. Gérôme.)

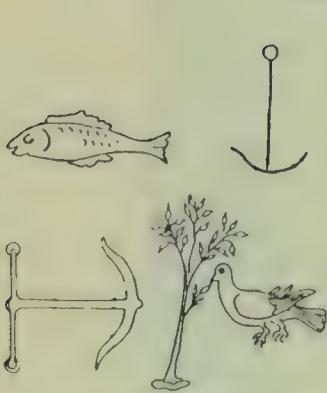
Hadrian, and that wonderful villa of his at Tibur, which contained a theatre, temple, libraries, and gardens within its walls, besides numerous statues, ornaments, and exquisite mosaics, many of which may be seen in the museums to-day.

In the third century we return again to a time of storm and stress, in the midst of which the number of the Christians increased so much that the Emperor Diocletian determined to persecute them in a way that should crush them once and for all. Everything was done to increase the popular hatred against these quiet and inoffensive people. As a Christian writer of the time says: "If the Tiber rises, if the Nile does not rise, if the heavens give no rain, if there is an earthquake, famine, or pestilence, straightway the cry is, 'The Christians to the lions.'" They dared not worship openly, but held their services in the catacombs, or underground burial-places of the city, where still may be seen on the walls the figure of a sheep-

herd carrying a kid, of a dove, or a fish—rudely-carved emblems of the faith of a people who knew that at any moment they might be called upon to lay down their lives for what they believed.

Yet Diocletian, in spite of his cruel persecutions, was an able ruler, and the first to see clearly that the empire was now too great to be ruled by one man.

For a few years the Eastern and Western branches of the empire were governed by different emperors,



Early Christian Symbols.

but in the first quarter of the fourth century they were united under the headship of Constantine. This emperor is famous for two reasons. He was the first to show favour to the Christians, and he was the founder of the city of Constantinople, which he now caused to take the former position of Rome as the centre of his empire. For a time Rome was completely eclipsed, but in the days to come she rose again as the capital of the Catholic Church, and the head of the "Holy Roman Empire," as we shall see.



During his early life Constantine had seen how great a power Christianity was becoming, and how persecution tended only to increase its strength. When he became emperor he showed not only tolerance but favour to the once despised sect; and though he did not actually profess their religion, nor receive baptism till he was upon his deathbed, he seems to have been a Christian at heart after a strange event, of which we are told by a historian of this time.

It was before he had made himself sole emperor that Constantine was on one occasion marching against a certain rival to the imperial throne. The night before the battle he stood in the door of his tent, thinking partly of this faith of Christ, of the truth of which he was still quite uncertain, and partly of his chances of success in the coming fight. Suddenly, as the sun was setting, he saw a light in the shape of a fiery cross flash out in the sky, and below it a scroll

bearing the words, "By this sign shalt thou conquer." Great was his astonishment to find that this was no idle fancy, but that it had also been seen by his soldiers. That night, as he lay sleeping in his tent, he dreamed that Christ appeared to him with the same sign, and bade him make a standard of it for his army. This he did in the form of a banner hung from a cross-bar on a spear, at the top of which was the Greek monogram for the name of Christ. He won that battle, and many others, and from that time did all in his power to help on the cause of Christ. From this period the history of Christianity is closely interwoven with that of the Roman state, and before very long that once persecuted and despised church was able to assert its supremacy even over the emperor himself. When Julian, known as the "Apostate," gave up the Christian faith in which he had been brought up, and did all he could to restore the old Greek paganism to the empire, he failed so completely that a legend of the period makes him confess upon his death-bed, "Thou hast conquered, O pale Galilean!"



When Theodosius, in the end of the fourth century, had ordered a massacre of the rebellious people of Thessalonica, in which over seven thousand perished, Ambrose, bishop of Milan, met the emperor at the door of the church as he came to worship, and forbade him to enter until he had done public penance for his crime. Thus well within a hundred years of the

persecution of the Christians under one emperor, Diocletian, another, Theodosius, bowed to the decree of the Christian Church, and appeared as a penitent to ask the mercy of the Christians' God.

At the beginning of the fifth century, indeed, we find at least one instance of a complete turning of the tables with regard to this matter of persecution, in the story of Hypatia, told more fully in the pages of Charles Kingsley's famous novel.

Hypatia was the daughter of a philosopher of note in Alexandria, the second city of importance in the Eastern Empire. She was a maiden of great beauty and intellect, and a follower of the doctrines of Plato, the wise teacher of ancient Greece. Then she became a lecturer at the university of the city, and crowds of pupils flocked to her brilliant teaching; while everywhere she was respected and admired for her cleverness and quiet dignity. Her special friend and supporter was Orestes, the prefect, or chief magistrate, of Alexandria; and it was said that her influence over him was preventing him from being on friendly terms with Cyril, the bishop of the Christian Church at Alexandria. The Christians looked on her with evil eyes, and, forgetful of the result of persecution in their own case, lay in wait for her under the leadership of one Peter, a "lay-reader," as we should nowadays call him. Dragging her from her chariot inside the great church of that city, they snatched her robe from her, and



literally tore her in pieces before the altar like wild beasts. "Thus," writes the historian of the age, "was no small shame brought upon Cyril and the Church of Alexandria, for murders and fights and the like are utterly opposed to the mind of Christ."

It was upon an empire in which the emperor and the chief bishop of the Christian Church were working together for the temporal and spiritual needs of the people that the barbarians descended in the fifth century.

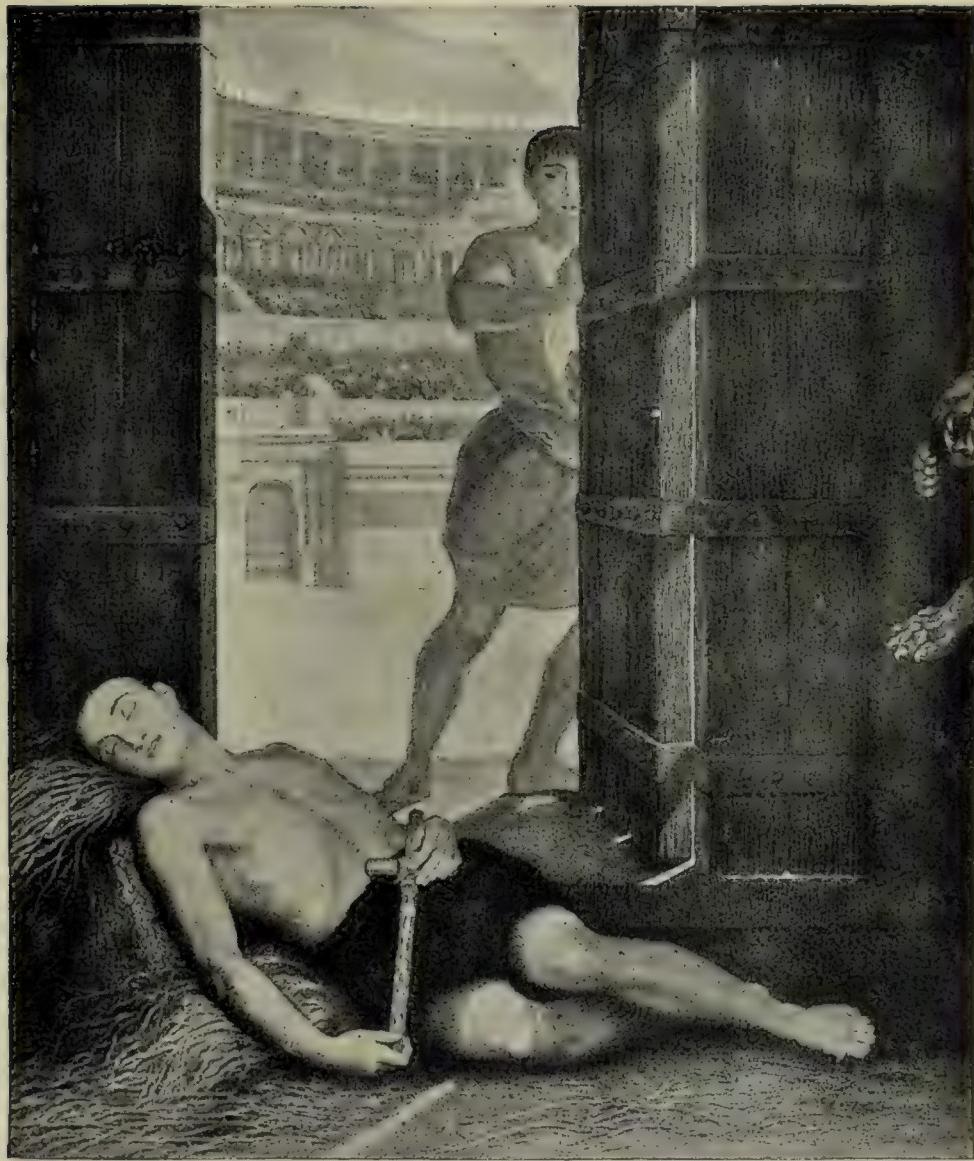
As early as the time of Augustus the tribes of Germany had proved to be the one obstacle to the universal lordship of Rome, and ever since they had threatened more or less the borders of the empire.



Now, however, these Goths, as they were called, pushed on by the incursions of Asiatic tribes of Huns from the East, attacked first Greece and then Italy under a leader named Alaric, whose aim was to take Rome herself.

The weakened empire trembled before this strong and terrible man. In vain the Romans recalled their legions from outlying districts such as Britain, and strove to drive him back. Twice he stood before the very walls of Rome, and once the demands he made as the price of his withdrawal were so great that the Romans asked in dismay, "What, then, will you leave us?" "Your lives," was his brief but efficient answer.

On his third invasion the Romans gave up in



A CHRISTIAN MARTYR IN THE REIGN OF DIOCLETIAN.
(From the painting by E. Slingeneyer. Photo by A. Rischgitz.)

despair, and saw their fair city wrecked and plundered by the barbarian host. The Goths did not stay in Italy, however, but moved westward into Spain, where they set up a kingdom of their own.

Then a worse fate overshadowed Rome, for the wilder and more savage race of the Huns, under Attila, "the Scourge of God," ravaged the East and threatened the West until their leader fell, by a sudden and mysterious death, some two years after the Romans, with the greatest difficulty, had beaten him back from Gaul. Then the Vandals, a tribe which had settled in Africa, sailed up the Tiber, and Rome was sacked for the second time. Some twenty years later the weak young king, Romulus Agustulus, the last of a great race of rulers, was turned off the throne by the Gothic chief, Odoacer, who made himself king of Italy, sending the imperial crown and robe to the Eastern emperor at Constantinople in token that the Western Empire of Rome had ceased to exist. In the next chapter we shall see how it was to rise again as the Second Empire of the West, better known perhaps as the Holy Roman Empire.

The importance of the legacy left by Rome to the Modern World can scarcely be overestimated. She is, to begin with, the link that binds modern Europe to the Ancient World through her close connection with Greece, and through Greece with the older civilizations of the East.



She was the first to set before the minds of men a great ideal of authority, of honour, and of citizenship. Our own modern system of laws is largely based upon the "Code" developed by the Emperor Justinian in the later days of the empire. Her widespread conquests carried the message of civilization over almost the whole of Europe; and as the centre of Christian life and thought for many centuries, Rome, the holy city of Christendom, practically transformed the life of the barbarian hordes upon her borders, and created a bond of unity between the different parts of the empire, which has endured, as far as her faith is concerned, down to the present day.

Chapter XVII.

THE SECOND EMPIRE OF THE WEST.

(750-900 A.D.)

DURING the fifth century, that century which saw the breaking up of the once powerful and united empire of the Romans, new races began to come to the front and to settle in various parts of Europe, all taking part in a great movement known sometimes as the "Wandering of the Nations."

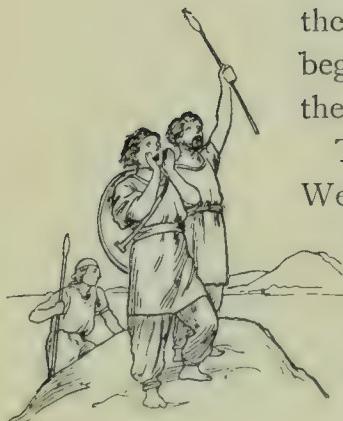
It was during this century of unrest that Theodoric, king of the Eastern Goths, moved from his settlement on the Danube banks, invaded Italy, and having



murdered Odoacer, ruled the country with a wise and strong hand for over thirty years. It was only after his death that Italy fell into the power of Justinian, Emperor of the East, and became once more a part of the empire. During this period also the prevailing restlessness of spirit sent the Germanic tribes who called themselves Saxons, Jutes, and Angles across the North Sea to find for themselves a home in Britain.

Most prominent of all these Germanic races were the Franks, who came originally from the lands about the Rhine, and who, when the wandering of the nations began, moved westward over the north of what was then called Gaul, and eastward as far as the river Elbe.

This people gradually became the foremost race in Western Europe, and were able to build up an empire known as the Second Empire of the West.



Their first great chieftain was Clovis, who, about the time that the Angles and Saxons were sailing their boats up the Thames and through the English Channel, was taking possession of Northern Gaul, and setting up his court at a small town on the Seine, afterwards to be known as Paris.

In those days he and his followers were heathens, but after a great victory over the tribes of Gaul he became a Christian, and was baptized with a large number of his people by the bishop of Rheims.

This was the beginning of a firm alliance between the bishops of Rome and the Frankish kings, which

did much to increase the power of both. Before the death of Clovis the kingdom of the Franks had been firmly planted north of the Loire, and under the rule of his descendants it extended, about the middle of the sixth century, over nearly all the territory now known as France, the Netherlands, and Western Germany. In the beginning of the eighth century the power of the Frankish king had very largely passed into the hands of his chief officers, one of whom, Pepin, known as the "Mayor of the Palace," made himself the actual ruler in all but name, and became the ancestor of a famous line of monarchs. His son, Charles Martel, or "The Hammer," as his name implies, had to put all his strength into the work of uniting the scattered conquests of his predecessors, as well as fulfilling his title as the "Hammer" of the Saracen tribes from Southern Spain, who at this time were doing their best to invade his dominions. The story of these Saracens belongs to the next chapter, and we will only notice here that it was at the famous battle of Tours that Charles so completely defeated them that henceforth they troubled France no more.

Pepin the Short, the son of Charles Martel, took a still more definite position as ruler of the Frankish kingdom. "Does the kingdom belong to him who exercises the power without the name, or to him who bears the name without the power?" he asked the Pope of Rome, who readily agreed to depose the last of the race of Clovis,



and to elect Pepin as "king by the grace of God." In this appeal we see how important was now the position of the spiritual head of that Holy Roman Empire which was about to spring into existence.

The story of Charlemagne, the actual founder of that empire, is full of romantic interest. Charlemagne succeeded his father, Pepin, at the age of twenty-nine, and was even then notable for his courage, strength, and manly beauty. Tall and ruddy-faced, with bright blue eyes, large nose, and commanding figure, he loved riding and hunting till the day of his death, and won the admiration and affection of all men as much by his tenderness and loyalty as a friend as by his dignity as a king.

After his death he became a hero of romances, in which he is pictured as "sweeping over Europe, surrounded by countless legions of soldiers, who formed a very sea of bristling steel."

But his actual deeds are enough, without poetical exaggeration, to win him a place among the heroes of the world's history. In the eyes of his contemporaries he was, in Longfellow's words—



"A man of iron !

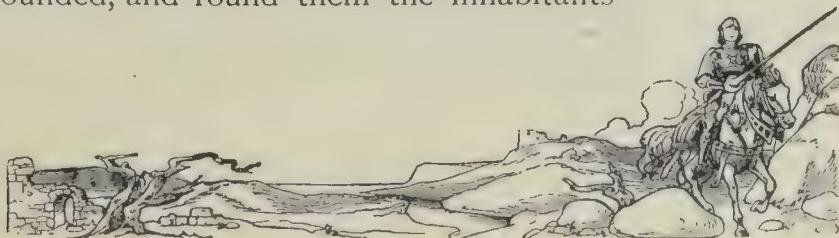
His helmet was of iron, and his gloves
Of iron, and his breastplate and his greaves
And tassets were of iron, and his shield.
In his left hand he held an iron spear,
In his right hand his sword invincible.
The horse he rode on had the strength of iron,
And colour of iron. All who went before him,
Beside him, and behind him.....

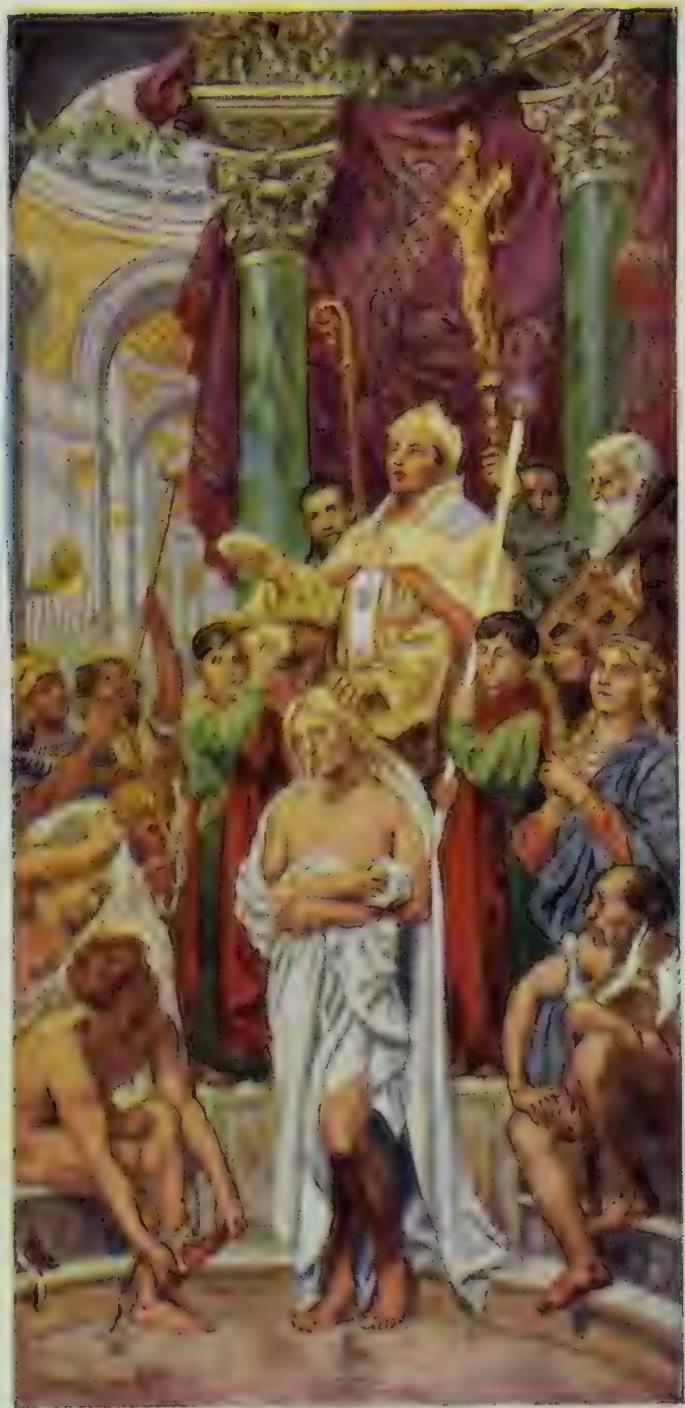
Were armed with iron, and their hearts within them
Were stronger than the armour that they wore.
The fields and all the roads were filled with iron,
And points of iron glistened in the sun,
And shed a terror through the city streets."

It was the high ideal of Charlemagne to unite all the German tribes together into one great Christian empire. This was no easy task, for only a small part of what we now call Germany was ruled by him. The most independent race of this wide region was that of the Saxons, the kinsmen of our own ancestors ; and they were the more difficult to conquer because they had no towns or roads, and so could retire, at very short notice, into a forest or swamp which was almost inaccessible to the more civilized invaders.

It took Charlemagne many long years to accomplish the task of conquest, years which are stained by the memory of deeds of cruelty and horror. In these days, too, it is perhaps a shock to find that, when they were conquered, these people were forced to become Christians exactly as they were forced to swear allegiance to their new ruler. The man was condemned to death who "shall have wished to hide himself unbaptized, and shall have scorned to come to baptism, and shall have wished to become a pagan," together with him who "shall have shown himself unfaithful to the lord king."

Once Charlemagne was victorious, however, the civilization of Germany went on apace. Numerous monasteries were founded, and round them the inhabitants





The Baptism of Clovis.

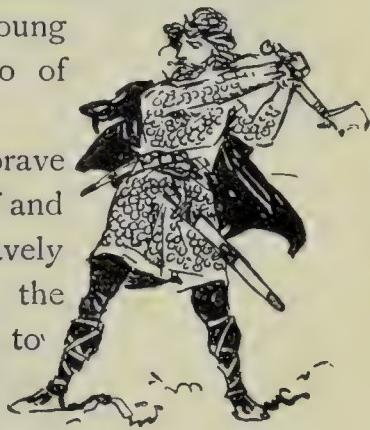
(From a study by Gilbert James, after the painting by Joseph Blanc, in the Pantheon, Paris.)

collected, until gradually the walls of a city arose where once was lonely swamp or impenetrable forest.

We must not linger here over the details of the wars in which Charlemagne faced the forces of the Huns, the scourge of Europe, and not only conquered them, but so impressed their leader with his powers that the latter declared himself willing to accept the supremacy, and to be baptized into the faith, of one who could fight so well.

One of Charlemagne's most famous campaigns was that against the Moors, who were continually harassing the district of the Christian chieftains in the north of Spain. It was then that he lost his nephew, young Roland, who afterwards became a mighty hero of romance.

At the famous pass of Roncesvalles this brave knight, betrayed by a jealous friend, found himself and his little band in the hands of the foemen. Bravely though he fought with his golden-hilted sword, the gift of the fairies, he was overwhelmed, and sank to the ground. But with his last breath he raised his horn and blew a mighty blast that was heard by Charlemagne thirty leagues away. With a shout of "'Tis Roland's horn!" the leader turned and galloped back to the pass ; and the foemen—



"Shrieked each unto other : 'The trumpets of France, we have
heard them cry !

Lo, he returneth, the mighty king ! lo, Charlemagne nigh !'"

But when he reached the fatal spot—

“Under a pine lay Roland the Count ; looking Spainward he lay—

* * * * *

Clasped are his hands in prayer—lo, now to his end hath he passed.”



The last important war undertaken by Charlemagne was that against the Lombards, a German tribe who had managed to overrun almost the whole of Italy. By driving them out the king of the Franks became ruler of Italy as far south as Rome, with the exception of Venice. This last campaign had been undertaken at the request of the Pope, for Rome had been hard pressed by the Lombard invaders ; and when Charlemagne had thus shown his might, it was naturally to him that Pope Leo turned again when a certain party within the city, jealous of his power, tried to drive him from the papacy. Charlemagne restored him, and thus the friendship between pope and king was made stronger than ever.

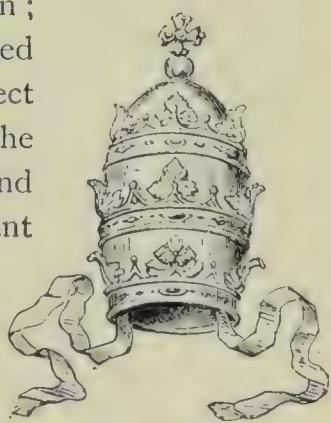
The way was now prepared for the great Frankish ruler's ultimate goal. He wanted the position of head, not of the kingdom of the Franks, but of the Roman Empire. It seemed as though this could only be obtained by a marriage with the Empress Irene, who held nominal sway over the Roman Empire at Constantinople, or by persuading her to divide the empire, leaving her to rule the East. But on Christmas Day 800, as Charlemagne knelt at the altar of St. Peter's

at Rome, the Pope, without a word of warning, placed a jewelled crown upon his head, and saluted him as Emperor of the Romans. Immediately the crowd of mingled races which filled the vast church cried out—

“Life and victory to Charles, the most pious Augustus, crowned by God, the great and peace-giving Emperor of the Romans.” From that time the empire of the East and that of the West were ruled by different heads, and Charlemagne’s dream of a Western Empire was fulfilled.

This, then, was the birth of that Holy Roman Empire which was to last for more than a thousand years, and which only came to an end in 1806, when the Austrian Emperor Francis the Second, after the conquests of Napoleon, formally resigned his title.

For the greater part of this period, however, the title of “Emperor” was but an empty form. The Western World was far too wide in extent to be ruled by one man; and though the coronation of Charlemagne did much to delay the settlement of the European nations, they were bound before long to mark out their own boundaries and to elect their own kings. Within a few years of his death this breaking-up process began; and though the German monarchs still were crowned by the Popes as “Lords of the World,” the chief effect was merely to increase the power and influence of the spiritual head of the Empire—namely, the Pope—and also to put into the hands of the latter an important



Papal Tiara, or Triple Crown.

weapon to be used against the Emperors with whom they came into conflict.



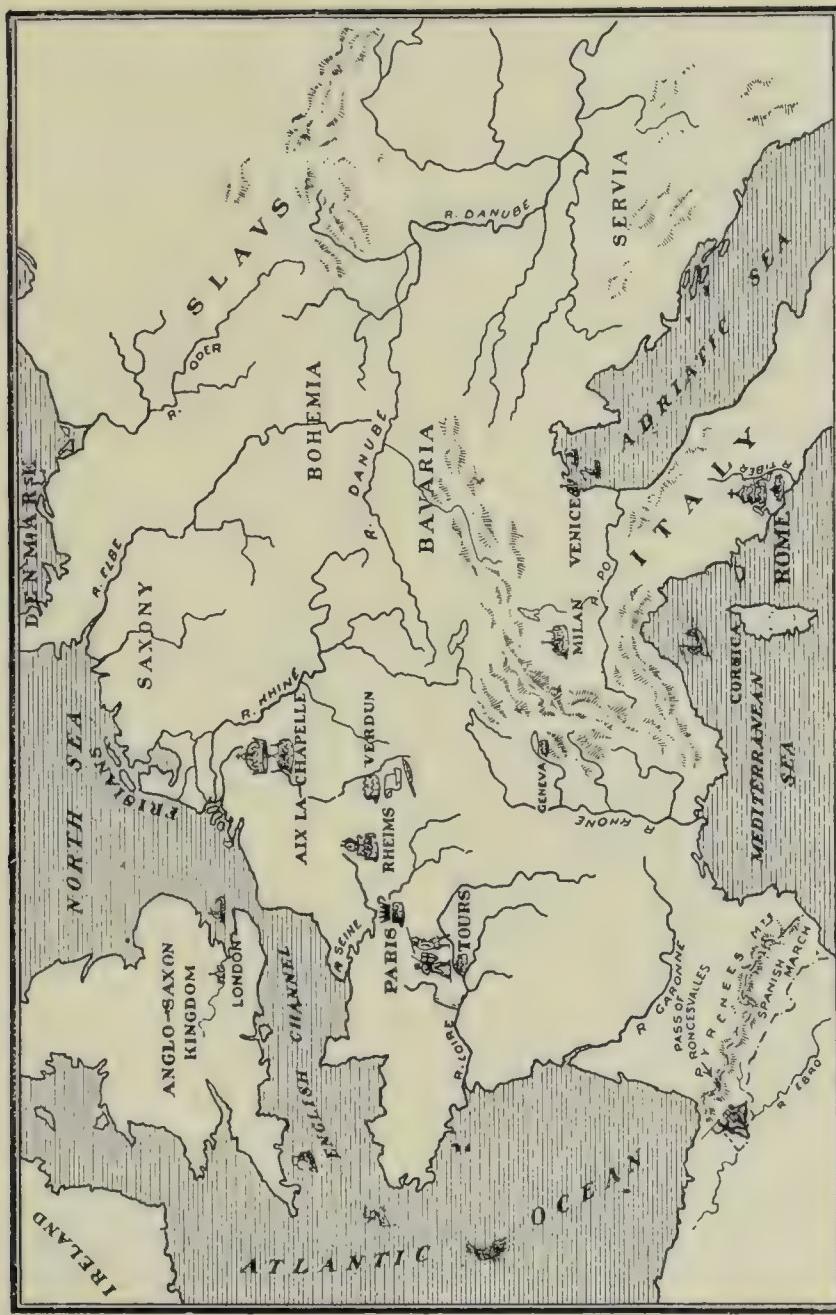
One of the main reasons for which we honour the name of Charlemagne was his love for education, which he rightly saw was the only true hope for the progress of the coming race ; and English people may be proud to know that when he searched Europe for a learned man who should act as tutor to his own sons, he found him in England, at the court of Offa of Mercia, Alcuin by name. And although he himself knew better how to hold a sword than a pen, and never could bring himself to learn to write, he encouraged literature and music in every way possible in those unliterary days.

In 814, when seventy years old, this great emperor died of a chill caught when hunting. He was buried in his royal tomb at Aix-la-Chapelle, the northern capital of his dominions, in a church which still forms part of the cathedral of that city.

Upon it was placed this inscription : "Under this tomb is laid the body of Charles, great and orthodox Emperor, who nobly enlarged the kingdom of the Franks, and for forty-seven years ruled prosperously."

And there, it is said, he was found, two centuries later, by one who entered the tomb, "sitting as in life, on a marble throne, dressed in his imperial robes, with his horn, his sword, and the book of the Gospels on his knee."

But to this day he lives in the hearts of the German

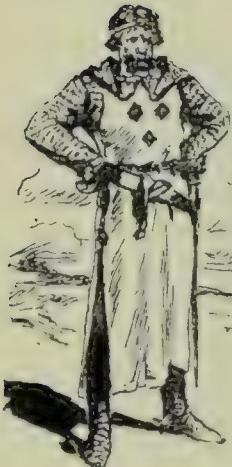


MAP OF WESTERN EUROPE.

race, who, rightly claiming him as their greatest ancestor, say that he still watches over his people, crossing the Rhine on a golden bridge, and blessing the vineyards and cornfields of their land.

One of the results of the union of Pope and Emperor as spiritual and temporal heads of the Holy Roman Empire was a perpetual struggle between the two during the Middle Ages for their respective rights and privileges.

The Emperor must be crowned by the Pope, the Pope's election must be confirmed by the Emperor; hence each had a weapon ready to hand. And so, in the eleventh century, we get one instance of a contest which lasted for many years, with scarcely any intermission—an instance which has become typical and illustrative of the struggle between Church and State.

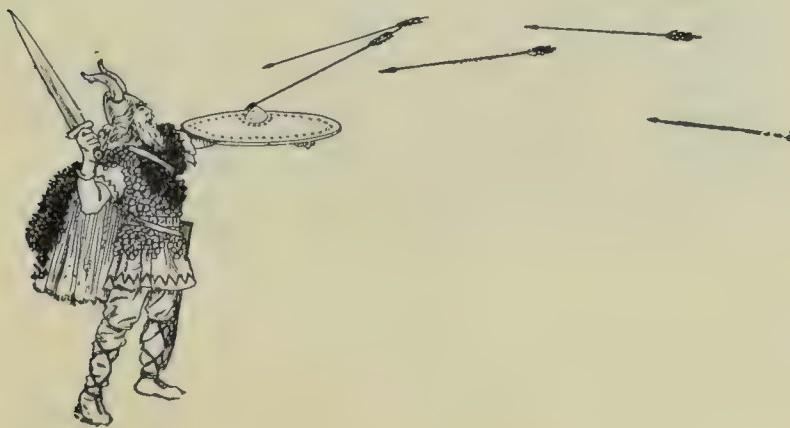


When the evil conduct of the Emperor Henry the Fourth had brought upon him a summons from the Pope to appear and answer in his court for his iniquities, Henry promptly summoned a council and declared the election of the Pope to be null and void. Upon this the Pope excommunicated the monarch, and ordered his subjects to depose him unless he made his submission to the Church within a year. Finding the Pope was the stronger, Henry at length sought him out in the castle of Canossa, a fortress built on a slope of the Apennines, and enclosed within a triple ring of walls. But when he arrived in all his magnificent

array, he received a curt message to send away his train, put off his royal robes, and wait barefoot and bareheaded in the snow and icy wind till it should be the Pope's pleasure to receive him. Thus did Henry "go to Canossa" and humble the State, as represented by him, before the Church.

Yet soon afterwards we find him in his turn expelling Gregory from Rome, and forcing him to die in exile; and even when he himself, deposed and penniless, had met his end while begging for a scrap of bread, the struggle between the two parties was by no means over.

One of the chief effects of this unnatural union of Italy with Germany was the increasing independence of the Italian "free cities," such as Venice, Florence, and Milan, each with its own form of government. In Germany, too, while the Emperor was busy fighting the Pope, his influence over his own country was bound to suffer; and so the latter became split up into different states, counties, free towns, and duchies, each practically independent of any central control on the part of the Emperor.



Chapter XVIII.

THE MOHAMMEDAN EMPIRE. (570-1453 A.D.)

WE must now glance at the story of an empire which once again brought the Eastern World into touch with the West through the conquests of a people known as the Mohammedans. It was in the remote country of Arabia that they had their birth as a religious sect, and about the year 570 that their founder first saw the light. Mohammed was of humble origin, and until the age of twenty-five had neither position nor influence in his own land. At that time he became the servant of a rich widow, and served her so faithfully that she fell in love with him, and eventually they were married. This gave Mohammed the opportunity he wanted ; but not until he was forty years old did he begin his actual campaign against the religion of his fellow-countrymen, which differed little from that which had existed in the days of Cyrus the Persian.

His chief doctrine was that there was but one God, and that he, as His prophet, had been sent to teach men how they should live according to God's will. As in the case of the first great Teacher of Christianity, the "common people heard him gladly ;" but the men of importance in his own city, Mecca, soon saw that the overthrow of their religion, which was centred



MEDINA, WHERE MOHAMMED WAS BURIED.

round the image of the god in their temple, would mean the loss of the considerable trade which was brought to the town by those who came to worship there. So bitterly did they attack Mohammed that he was forced to leave Mecca, and presently made his way to Medina, whose inhabitants, having had a Jewish colony in their midst, had learnt many of the doctrines which Mohammed taught, since these were, in their essential points, identical with those of the Jews. At Medina, therefore, he was gladly received.

The date of Mohammed's flight from Mecca, known as the Hejira, was the year 622, from which epoch the Mohammedans still reckon their time, as we do from the year of our Lord's birth.

The Jews, however, always very exclusive in matters of faith, would not hear of accepting the newcomer as a prophet, and so Mohammed turned his whole energy to the task of converting the Arabs. Mecca, the centre of their national life, was made their holy city, towards which they were taught to turn their faces in prayer, instead of to Jerusalem, as in the earlier days when Mohammed hoped to win over the Jews. But the men of Mecca would show nothing but hostility, and so at length he decided that the "Faithful"—as his own followers were called—should be stirred up to fight against the opponents of their religion. Carefully he trained his men, teaching them meanwhile that he who fell in fighting for his faith was assured of eternal

bliss, with the result that his little band of three hundred men defeated a thousand Meccans, and entered the city in triumph. From that time the success of Mohammed was assured ; and before his death, in 632, not only had all Arabia embraced the new religion, but its adherents were ready, by means of the sword if need should arise, to force it upon the dwellers in every country upon the earth.

Mohammed's great work was to form the Arabs, hitherto a scattered and insignificant people, into a strong nation, destined for three hundred years to lead the world in matters of intellect.

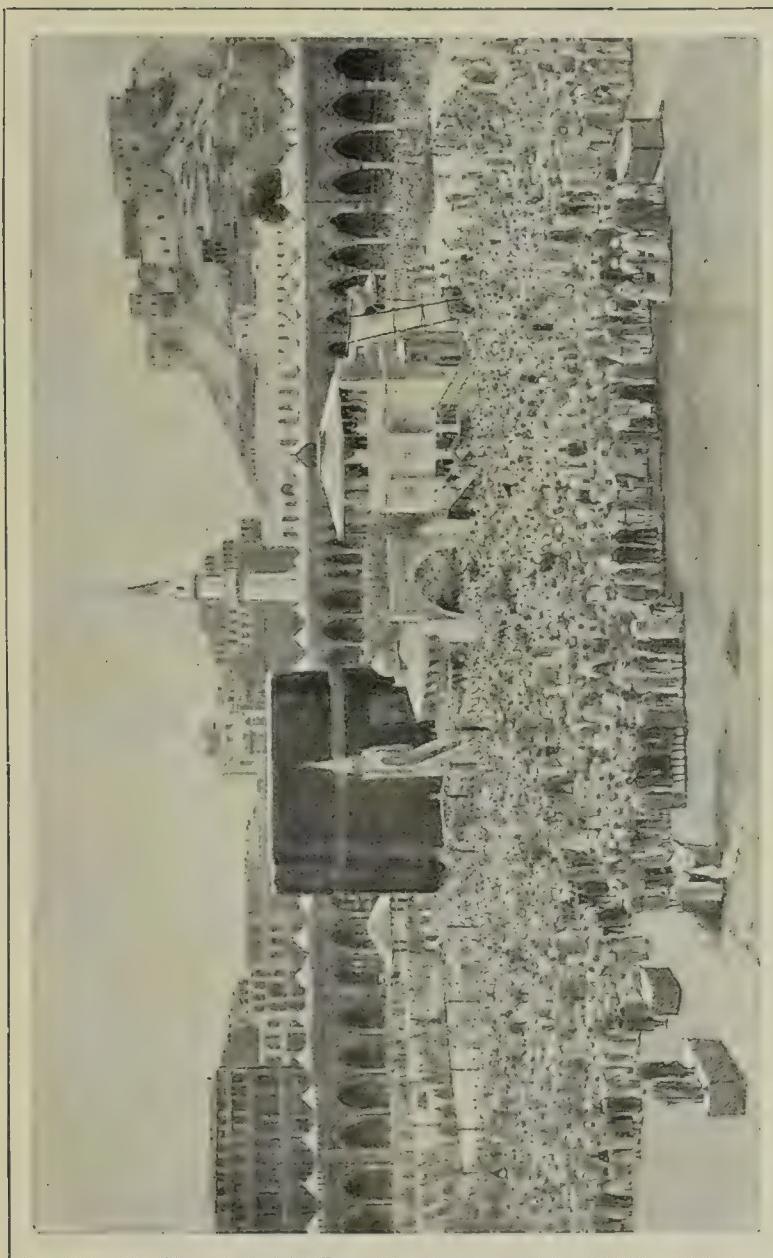
He taught men the value of moderation, temperance, and simplicity of life, partly by his own example, and partly by means of the Koran, the sacred book of his religion, which became to his followers what the Bible is to the Christian. Also, as we have seen, he taught them to glory in the power of the sword, and to become the best fighters in the world. Thus it came about that within thirty years of his death the Mohammedans had conquered Persia, Syria, and Egypt, and had become the acknowledged rulers of the Eastern World, with Bagdad as its centre. In the beginning of the eighth century they had settled in North-west Africa, where they first took the name of Moors. From thence they had but to cross the narrow Straits of Gibraltar to find themselves in Spain, which soon fell into their hands. Within

seven years they had made themselves rulers of almost the whole of that country, and were only prevented by the result of the great battle of Tours, of which we have read in the story of Charles Martel, from invading the Empire of the Franks.

Meantime, in the Eastern World, the Holy City, Jerusalem, had fallen under the rule of the Mohammedans, who did not interfere, however, with the Christian pilgrims who were wont to visit it. There is, indeed, a story of Charlemagne himself making his way barefoot to the Holy City, and of the respect paid to him by the wise caliph, Haroun-al-Raschid, who delivered to him the keys of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, which had been built over the grave of Jesus Christ by Helena, mother of the Emperor Constantine. During the eleventh century, however, the Empire of the Arabian followers of Mohammed, the Saracens, as they are usually called, passed entirely into the hands of the Turks of Central Asia, who, though they adopted the faith of their conquered foes, were quite unable to understand the real spirit of civilization and culture introduced by the earlier sect of the "Faithful," and who utterly changed the character of Mohammedanism in its own home.



But this change took a long time to accomplish, and meantime the Western World had learnt much from the Saracens themselves. We must remember, to begin with, that about the year 1000 A.D. the



PILGRIMS AT THE KAABA, MECCA.

(Photo by M. Courtelement.)

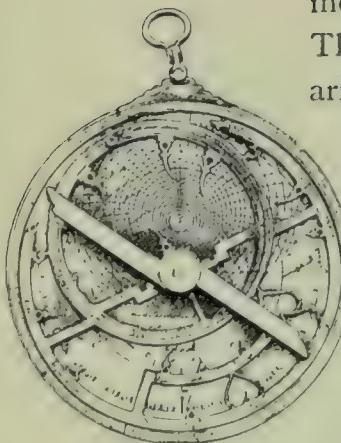
Kaaba, the sanctuary, at Mecca, of the "black stone," the centre formerly of pagan, now of Islamic worship. Tradition associates the Kaaba with Abraham's casting out Hagar and Ishmael. The "black stone" is an aerolite.

latter held possession of the greater part of Spain and all the islands of the Mediterranean ; and since these islands were the calling-stations for the trading-vessels of Europe, the spirit of this Eastern civilization was bound to filter through into other lands. The pilgrims, too, who visited the Holy Land often combined the religious fervour of a pilgrimage with a profitable trade in silk or spices ; and thus, through the Arabian merchants, another means of intercourse sprang up.

Let us consider what these early Mohammedans had to teach. They had established at Bagdad, Cairo, and Cordova the most famous universities in the world, crowded with students, Christian as well as Mohammedan, who studied there philosophy, law, and rhetoric. The Arabs were the first to bring a knowledge of arithmetic into the West, and the first to show that

the value of digits varied according to their position. The science of algebra is due to them ; they had a wide knowledge of astronomy ; they developed a beautiful style of architecture, distinguished by the horseshoe arch, the dome, and the minaret ; they cultivated a taste for music ; and they knew more about the science of medicine than any other nation of the world.

Then they were equally to the front in their manufactures, in which "they outdid the world in variety and beauty of design and perfection of workmanship.



Ancient Moorish Astrolabe.

They worked in all the metals—gold, silver, copper, bronze, iron, and steel. In textile fabrics they have never been surpassed. They made glass and pottery of the finest quality. They knew the secrets of dyeing, and they manufactured paper. They had many processes of dressing leather, and their work was famous throughout Europe. They made tinctures, essences, and syrups. They made sugar from the cane, and grew many fine kinds of wine. They practised farming in a scientific way, and had good systems of irrigation. They excelled in horticulture, knowing how to graft and how to produce new varieties of fruit and flowers. They introduced into the West many trees and plants from the East, and wrote scientific treatises on farming.” *

The effect of this spirit of civilization during the centuries sometimes, though quite wrongly, called the “Dark Ages,” must have been striking enough; but it was seriously checked by the conquests of the Turks, who, after taking Asia Minor from the Empire of the East, settled down at Nicæa, just opposite Constantinople, and began to threaten the very centre and capital of that empire. By their active persecution of the Christian pilgrims at Jerusalem, moreover, the Turks showed only too plainly that the toleration shown by the Arabs by no means appealed to them. The gray-haired Patriarch, or Bishop of the Holy

* Thatcher and Schevill’s “General History of Europe.”



City, was dragged off to prison, there to remain until he had paid a huge ransom. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre was partially destroyed, and everywhere men, women, and children were called upon to witness for their faith with their blood.

At length the spirit of the Western World was stirred to action. Moved by the words of Peter the Hermit, who had seen with his own eyes the treatment of the Christians by the "unbelieving hounds" of Moslem, and who had promised the Eastern Patriarch in his cell that the nations of the West should take up arms in his cause, all Europe rose to rescue the Holy Land from the hands of the infidel.



A Council, summoned at Clermont by Pope Urban the Second, called upon the kings and princes of Europe to do their part; and meantime a vast troop of peasants—men, women, and even children—set out for the East under Peter the Hermit and Walter the Penniless. Without food, discipline, or means of transit, few of them got even as far as Nicæa, where they were at once slaughtered wholesale by the Turks. And though this was not an actual Crusade, it is, to some degree, typical of several that followed.

Vast numbers of knights and their followers set forth between the years 1094 and 1270, some of them stirred by true religious enthusiasm, some by romantic emotion, many by love of adventure alone. In 1099, indeed, Jerusalem was actually captured, and a Chris-



(1,447)

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Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives.

tian noble, Godfrey of Bouillon, reigned as king within its walls; but within ninety years the valiant Saladin had driven out the Christian king, and set up his own rule over the city. Within another ninety years, during which five more Crusades set out for the East, all that had been conquered by the Christians had been recaptured by the Turks, and the whole series of attempts appeared to be an absolute failure. Yet few of the great movements of history have had more effect upon the Western World.

At a time when it was essential that the various nations of Europe should maintain a kind of peace with one another in order to have an opportunity for growth and settlement, the surplus energy of their fighting populations was drawn off to the East. This was the case, for example, in England, whose king, Richard the First, spent the whole of his reign, save a few months, in fighting in the Holy Land, in prison in Germany, and in petty warfare against the King of France. But this gave England time to settle down and bring into working order the reforms made by Henry the Second.

Then the "intellectual horizon" of Europe was enlarged. "Life in the West was still very rude. The houses lacked all luxuries and comforts, and most of those things which are now regarded as necessities. The European entered on a new world when he set out on a Crusade. He found new climates,

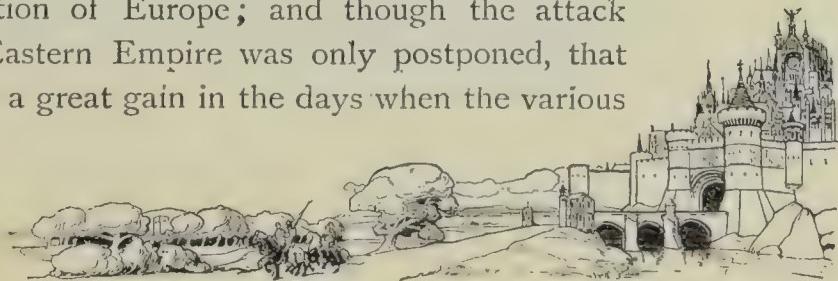


new natural products, strange dress, houses, and customs. The features of the landscape and even the skies above him were different, and in the houses he found many new objects of comfort and luxury."

It was the curiosity awakened by these unfamiliar surroundings, together with the important trade interests established with the East, that first stirred Europeans to set out on voyages of discovery into other lands. Hence the Crusades may be said to have awakened the spirit which the Renaissance, of which we shall presently read, was to develop.

The Crusades did much also to increase the power of the Church, and to weaken that of the great feudal nobles. When kings and their chief men were absent at the wars, their power fell into the hands of the Pope, the archbishops, or the bishops who stayed behind. Often the lands of the absentee were left in their charge, and became their property if the owner never returned. Often, too, the nobles sold their lands and privileges in order to get money to raise an army for the Holy War, and so the old feudal nobility began to die out.

Thus, although never conquered, the Turks were prevented by the long series of Crusades from overrunning the Eastern Empire, and probably a still greater portion of Europe; and though the attack upon the Eastern Empire was only postponed, that in itself was a great gain in the days when the various



nations, as we have seen, had not had time to grow up and develop themselves.

Lastly, we must note also that though the movement on the whole was a failure, and though each Crusade was often utterly mismanaged by its leaders, the spirit that led men to take up arms in defence of the Holy City was in itself a fine and unselfish ideal of generous sacrifice, which did much to foster the idea of chivalry so dear to the Middle Ages. That young and old alike were moved by this spirit is seen in the story of the boy Stephen, who gathered together thirty thousand children in France, all bent on fighting for the cause of God, and led them to Marseilles, where they waited in the sure hope that the waters of the sea would be cleft asunder to let them pass through on dry ground to the Syrian shores. Over twenty thousand perished on the march. The rest were induced to go aboard some merchant vessels, whose captains promised to conduct them "for the cause of God" to the Holy Land: these were all sold in the slave-markets of the Mohammedans, and were never heard of again.

The part taken by the Eastern Empire in the Crusades is curious when we remember that it was partly on its account that they were undertaken. For when the armies of the Crusaders would have passed through Constantinople on their way to the East, in 1203, the emperor refused them permission to do so.



THE TURKS OFFERING TO MAKE LOUIS IX. THEIR KING ON
CONDITION THAT HE BECAME A MOHAMMEDAN.

(*From the picture by Cabanel.*)

This, however, was due partly to the reckless plundering of the Crusaders, and partly to the determination of some of their leaders to interfere in political matters, and to help a deposed emperor to regain his position.

It is clear that during the years in which the Empire of Charlemagne, in its robust youth, had been putting new strength into all the divisions of Western Europe, the East, the inheritor of the ancient Empire of Greece, had been growing weaker. One source of her weakness was the fact that, owing to disagreement about a certain point of doctrine, the Eastern, or Greek Church, as it was henceforth known had separated itself during the eleventh century from the Roman Church with all its mighty powers. The result of this was that in the beginning of the thirteenth century the Crusaders, incensed at the attitude taken towards them by the Eastern emperor, besieged and took Constantinople, and held it for nearly sixty years. But the Eastern and Western Worlds were too far apart to be ruled together, and in 1261 a Greek emperor, ruling over a disorganized and partially independent empire, sat upon the royal throne in Constantinople.



About this period the Mohammedan provinces of Asia Minor began to be overrun by hordes of "Ottoman" Turks from Central Asia. Gradually this new race of Mohammedans approached nearer and nearer to the coasts of Europe. In the middle of the four-

teenth century, when their distant religious kinsmen, the Moors, were being driven out of Spain, they attacked the separated states of the Eastern Empire. They took Hadrianople, and made it the temporary capital of what was to be the Ottoman Empire, and finally made a ring round Constantinople.

So well did they rule their conquered territory that, although the capital held out for a hundred years, they were accepted without demur by the whole country round. Of the young boys whom they demanded as part of the yearly tribute, they made the famous "Janissaries," who, trained as soldiers from their early years, became the world-renowned fighters of the Ottoman army. Still Constantinople held out, and within her walls the scholars who, alone of all the nations of Europe, had preserved the treasures of the literature of Ancient Greece, studied and taught, unconscious or careless of the sword suspended above their heads.

But in 1453 it fell at last, and the Turks took Constantinople. The great Church of St. Sophia became a Mohammedan mosque, the Cross was replaced by the Crescent—the emblem of Mohammedanism—and Constantinople became the capital of the Ottoman Empire.

The fall of Constantinople is one of the great turning-points of history. Hitherto all that is meant by the culture and learning of the Ancient World had been





buried within her walls. Now that her scholars were dispersed throughout Europe, they carried with them this "New Learning," as it was called, though it was in reality the oldest of all. Had Europe been still engaged in great schemes of warfare, she would have turned a deaf ear; but towards the end of the fifteenth century she was settling down, tired of perpetual conflict, and ripe for something new in the way of intellectual interest. The knowledge of the civilization shown in the art and literature of Ancient Greece was a revelation to her. Books became a necessity, and the birth of printing followed hard upon the first realization of this fact. New ideas pervaded every kind of life and activity. Curiosity was roused in every direction, and speculation rose to fever heat when the philosopher Copernicus proved beyond doubt that the motion of the earth round the sun was an assured fact. Perhaps it is not easy to us nowadays to see why this discovery acted like a thunderbolt on Europe. But let us remember that it led men to consider whether, if what had been universally believed for thousands of years was absolutely untrue, they had better not look into other theories of life and science which had been unquestioningly received. And thus men began to think, which is, of course, the very best basis for real education.

So the chief effect of the establishment of the Mohammedan Empire in South-eastern Europe, an em-

pire ruled at first by men of a low type of civilization, and one which was opposed to progress in any form, was to spread the forgotten culture of the Ancient World over the greater part of Western Europe.

Moreover, if this Renaissance, or "new birth" of learning, had not come about, it is probable that the Reformation movement, so closely bound up with it, would have been much delayed. So that two of the greatest changes in the story of the Modern World were the results, partly direct and partly indirect, of the extension of the Mohammedan Empire.

Chapter XIX.

THE EMPIRE OF CHARLES V.

(1450-1600 A.D.)

IT was about forty years after the Mohammedan Empire had included a part of Europe within its boundaries that the Moors, who had originally occupied a portion of that empire, were driven out of Spain. For many years after the rest of their dominions had been taken from them they had held out in Granada, sending back to those who demanded their submission the courageous message, "If you want our arms, you must come and take them."

But at that time the strength of Spain had been



THE SURRENDER OF GRANADA TO FERDINAND AND ISABELLA.
(From the painting by Praxilla. Collection, Augustin Rischgritz.)

immensely increased by the marriage of Ferdinand of Aragon with Isabella of Castile, who united two of the most important provinces under their rule, and who set to work to drive the Moors from Spain, and to make that country one of the first in Europe.

Without trying to take Granada, the Moorish stronghold, by storm, these "Catholic princes," as their subjects loved to call them, set to work to raise a city outside its walls. When this had been done in the extraordinarily short period of eighty days, they waited there with their army until the spirit of the Moors gave way. Under the pressure of famine the latter opened their gates. Then Ferdinand and Isabella entered Granada in solemn state and received the keys of the Alhambra, the palace of the Moorish kings.

For a while the Moors were allowed to stay in the land and to keep their own religion, but henceforth they were scorned as heretics and despised as a fallen foe; and so the race that had done so much to civilize the land of its adoption gradually departed from her shores.

Freed from the drawbacks of a divided kingdom, Spain under Ferdinand and Isabella came rapidly to the front, and soon began to take a foremost place among the empires of the Modern World.

This was partly due to the fact that she became, during the sixteenth century, the wealthiest country in Europe, partly through the discoveries of Columbus,



partly through the conquests of Cortes and Pizarro in Mexico and Peru.

The story of Columbus, with which Spain was concerned almost by chance, is too well known to need telling here. We will, however, give a glance at the even more interesting story of the conquest of Mexico in 1519.

It was probably the example of Columbus that first incited Fernando Cortes to ask for a commission from the Spanish governor of Cuba to go forth on his voyage of adventure. Columbus, when he made his famous discovery of the New World, had said, "I have only opened the door for others to enter," and Cortes determined to be one of the first to do so.



Landing with eleven ships on the coast of Yucatan, the "astonishment and terror excited by the destructive effect of firearms" and the "monstrous apparition of men on horseback" soon dispersed the natives, who, with hostile looks, had advanced to meet them. One of the prisoners taken at this battle was a young girl, whom Cortes called Marina, who could talk both the languages spoken by the two races of natives of Mexico, and who very soon learnt Spanish. She became most valuable to Cortes as an interpreter, and accompanied his troops wherever he went. From her Cortes learnt that the capital of Mexico, which the natives called the "land where the god lived," was nearly

seventy leagues inland, and was ruled by the great Aztec chief, Montezuma. He discovered also, to his great surprise, that this king, instead of being the leader of an uncivilized race, was the ruler of a great empire which extended from the Gulf of Mexico to the Pacific; an empire, moreover, which, except in the matter of religion, had little or nothing to learn from Europe. The natives were deeply learned in astronomy, they were skilled in music, they had numerous schools in which both boys and girls were taught, and colleges for the teaching of history, the principles of government, and natural science. Although it has been thought that their political institutions were about on a level with those of the English under King Alfred, in their attire and way of living they were certainly in advance of that period.

"The dress of the higher warriors," we read, "was picturesque and often magnificent. Their bodies were covered with a close vest of quilted cotton, so thick as to be impenetrable to the light missiles of Indian warfare. This garment was so light and serviceable that it was adopted by the Spaniards."

Sometimes armour made of thin plates of gold or silver was worn by the chiefs, and over this was thrown a cloak of gorgeous featherwork.

When the king was called upon to settle important causes or to pass sentence of life or death, he went to a great throne, called the "tribunal of God," made of

pure gold inlaid with precious stones. "On a stool in front was placed a human skull, crowned with an immense emerald and surmounted by an aigrette of brilliant plumes and precious stones. The skull was laid on a heap of military weapons, shields, quivers, bows, and arrows.....Putting on his mitred crown encrusted with jewels, and holding a golden arrow by way of a sceptre in his left hand, the king laid his right upon the skull and pronounced judgment."



It was to Mexico, the centre of this emperor's dominions, that Cortes, after doing much to win over the natives to a friendly alliance, now made his way. Every city he passed through resounded with the praise of the great Montezuma. "Are you his subject?" asked Cortes of the *cazique*, or chieftain, of an important and populous town. "Who is there," asked the prince in reply, "who is not tributary to that emperor?"

And when the Spaniard replied, "*I am not*," and went on to explain that the Spanish king was much more powerful than the Aztec ruler, he was obviously, though politely, disbelieved.

At length, having made a friendly alliance with a powerful little republic on the way, Cortes and his army found themselves upon a great causeway leading across the salt lake which lay near to the capital of the Western World.

Here they were met by several hundred Aztec

chiefs, who came out to announce the approach of Montezuma, and to welcome the Spaniards to his capital. Soon after, they beheld the glittering retinue of the emperor emerging from the great street leading through the heart of the city. Amidst a crowd of nobles they saw the golden palanquin blazing with burnished gold. It was borne on the shoulders of nobles, and over it a canopy of gaudy featherwork, covered with jewels and fringed with silver, was supported by four attendants of the same rank. Presently Montezuma alighted from the litter and advanced, while his subjects, who lined the causeway, bent forward with their eyes fixed on the ground as he passed. Dismounting from his horse, Cortes stepped forward to greet him; and having hung round the emperor's neck a sparkling chain of coloured crystal, would have embraced him in Spanish fashion, had he not been restrained by two Aztec lords, who were horrified at such profanation of the person of their monarch.

On entering the city, the Spaniards were greatly struck by the evidences of civilization all around them. They passed through an avenue lined with houses whose flat roofs were protected by parapets, and often showed a mass of flowers. "Occasionally a great square intervened, surrounded by its porticoes of stone and stucco; or a pyramidal temple reared its colossal bulk crowned with its tapering sanctuaries and altars blazing with inextinguishable fires. But



what most impressed the Spaniards were the throngs of people who swarmed through the streets and on the canals." Here Cortes was given a palace large enough to house the whole of his followers, and soon we find him endeavouring, by means of theological discussion, to convert the emperor to the Catholic faith. But Montezuma replied that, though the God of the Spaniards must be a good being, his gods also were good to him: "there was no need of further discourse on the matter." Otherwise he gladly listened to the stranger's account of the Old World, and in his turn showed him all the wonders of his empire. These, intensely interesting though they are, must be passed over here, and we must go on to the dastardly act—for such it must seem to us—by which Cortes repaid the kindness and hospitality of the emperor.

Fearing that these peaceful relations might lead to nothing, Cortes determined to seize Montezuma in his own palace, make him his prisoner, and so get the government of the country into his own hands. An excuse was afforded by a report that, after a conflict with some of the Spaniards whom he had left at the coast, the Aztecs had sent the head of one of them as a gift to the emperor, having first shown it in triumph in some of the chief cities.

On hearing this, Cortes obtained an audience of Montezuma, and having posted a strong force outside the palace, accused him openly of treachery. This



A PORTRAIT OF A SPANISH ADMIRAL BY VELASQUEZ, THE
FAVOURITE PORTAIT PAINTER OF PHILIP IV. OF SPAIN.
(*In the National Gallery, London. Photo by Hanfstaengl.*)

the emperor denied, and eagerly agreed to summon the Aztec chief who had stirred up the tumult against the Spaniards, and even to await his coming in the palace occupied by Cortes. Here he was practically a prisoner, and when the Aztec chief and sixteen of his men had been brought up before the Spanish general and executed in the courtyard of the palace, Cortes even went so far as to order iron fetters to be placed upon Montezuma's ankles. "The great emperor seemed to be struck with stupor, and spoke never a word;" and even when Cortes, feeling he had gone far enough, had the irons removed and bade him return to his palace, Montezuma seems to have been too terrified to stir.



Within a short time Cortes was practically master of the city.

At his feet the abject Montezuma poured out the enormous hoards of his ancestors, with regrets that the treasure was no larger. "When brought into the quarters, the gold alone was sufficient to make three great heaps. It consisted partly of native grains, partly of bars; but the greatest portion was in utensils and various kinds of ornaments and curious toys, together with imitations of birds, insects, or flowers, executed with uncommon truth and delicacy. There were also quantities of collars, bracelets, fans, and other trinkets, in which the gold and feather work were richly powdered with pearls and precious stones."

Meantime the movements of Cortes were hastened by the news that the Spanish governor of Cuba, jealous of his success, had sent an army against him, under a leader who demanded that his authority should be at once acknowledged by the adventurer.

This man, however, was not only defeated by Cortes, but his soldiers were only too pleased to enlist under the banner of the conqueror, which was fortunate, seeing that the city of Mexico had promptly revolted against the Spanish officer left in command.

In the struggle that followed, the Mexicans showed clearly that their real hostility against the strange invaders had only been suppressed and not removed. It was, indeed, only by persuading Montezuma to protect them that they could hope for a safe retreat.

Ascending the central turret of the palace, the Aztec emperor assured his people that the strangers were his friends, and that they were quite prepared to leave Mexico of their own accord at once.

But, probably because of Cortes's attempts to overthrow their religion, the people would not be quieted. A shower of spears and stones was hurled at Montezuma, and the unhappy emperor was struck to the ground. Not even the sacredness of his office could save him, if he were believed to be in league with the hated white men who had scorned the gods of the Aztecs ; and in a few days Montezuma, maintaining a proud silence to the end, breathed his last.



Columbus landing in the New World.

(From the picture by Puebla.)

A deadly struggle between the Spaniards and the Mexicans ensued, and at last Cortes was forced to retreat. But this was only for a time. An alliance was made with a neighbouring state, and the siege of Mexico began. It lasted seventy-five days, and when the city fell nothing was left of it but a heap of ruins.

The whole of Mexico was thus added to the Empire of Charles the Fifth, then ruler of Spain. Yet we read that when Cortes returned to his country, and, in the hope of some recognition of his services, appeared before the king, Charles asked carelessly of his courtiers, "Who is the man?"

"It is one, sire," answered the great discoverer, "who has added more provinces to your dominions than any other governor has added towns."

Yet it was largely by means of the riches of Mexico and Peru, of whose conquest we must not stay to tell the story here, that the Empire of Charles the Fifth was built up and established.

A dominion, however, that depended only on wealth for its strength, was not likely to have a very firm foundation; and in fact, in the days when its prosperity seemed at its height, the Empire of Charles the Fifth was very near its fall.

When Charles, the grandson of Ferdinand and Isabella, succeeded to the Spanish throne as a boy of sixteen, it seemed as though he would find a heavy task in ruling a country inclined to disunion and to

contest the authority of so young a king. Yet three years later he was called to a wider field of activity in addition, for the death of the Emperor Maximilian of Germany caused the Imperial crown to be offered to his ambitious and powerful young grandson. Charles the Fifth was, however, quite equal to the double burden—a burden that included, let us remember, the Netherlands, as well as Sicily, Sardinia, and the kingdom of Naples—and he proceeded to lay claim to territory in France and Italy which, if he were successful in obtaining it, would place the limits of his European empire far beyond those of Charlemagne.

This claim of Charles was the cause of the incessant wars waged during his reign—wars which were maintained by the vast sums of money provided by his newly-acquired provinces in the New World. Francis, king of France, was his lifelong rival and enemy; and while Italy became the battle-ground upon which their quarrels were fought out, and a prey to the robber bands of which the Emperor's army largely consisted, Rome herself was sacked by the allies of Charles, the Pope captured, and many of the people massacred. In the midst of the hostilities which were renewed between Francis and Charles by this event, a terrible rumour began to spread throughout Western Europe.

The Turks, under their invincible leader Soliman, taking advantage of the conflict in which most of the European countries were embroiled, were marching

on Vienna, and threatening to overrun Austria up to the very borders of Italy. All Europe stood aghast. Hastily the Pope was restored to his position, and at once an order was issued by him that each day, as the church bells rang at noontide, the people should pray for deliverance from the infidel.

It was left to Charles to drive back the Turks from the Austrian territories, a task which he effectually performed ; but it was in connection with another daring enterprise that his name became blessed throughout Europe.

For years past the Mohammedan pirates of North Africa had harassed the coasts of Italy and Spain, carrying off thousands of sailors as slaves to their strongholds of Tunis and Algiers, and fast destroying the commerce of the Mediterranean. Descending upon these pirates in their own lair, Charles not only crushed their power, but delivered twenty thousand Christian slaves who had been languishing in captivity.

The last years of this great Emperor were darkened by the failure of his projected invasion of France, as well as by the futility of his attack upon the German Protestants, who had fast increased in power and numbers under the energetic impulse given by Martin Luther. We will not follow here the details of that struggle ; it is enough to note its effect upon Charles.

Suddenly, in the very midst of his ambitious projects, he resigned his crown, and exchanged the Imperial

purple for the cloak of a monk. Retiring to a monastery, the once brilliant Emperor became the "Pilgrim of St. Just," and spent his days in meditation upon his latter end, which came some eighteen months later.

At his death his European Empire became divided, and Spain, with its vast foreign possessions, fell into the hands of his son Philip the Second, the husband of Queen Mary of England.

Outwardly all seemed well. The riches of the New World still flowed into the Spanish coffers ; the Spanish navy was the greatest in the world ; and the king stood forth as the champion of the Roman Church. Yet the actual rottenness of the Spanish Empire is seen in the fact that it needed but the determined opposition of a little English fleet, and the daring pluck of a handful of adventurers, to rob Spain of her position as Mistress of the Sea, and to destroy to a large extent her trade in the New World.

In the same reign Holland was lost to Spain through the independent spirit of the Dutch Protestants under William the Silent, and the once powerful kingdom was reduced to a condition which has been described as that of "a great ship whose prow was in the Indian Ocean and her stern in the Atlantic, but which had lost her mast and rigging, and had foundered on the coast in the tempest of Protestantism."

The might of Spain had waned, and France, her rival, was already waiting to step into her place.



AN INCIDENT IN MEDIEVAL WARFARE—LADIES OF SIENA ASSISTING IN THE DEFENCE OF
THE CITY AGAINST THE EMPEROR CHARLES V.

(From a print after Hamman. Rischgitz Collection.)

Chapter XX.

THE GROWTH OF THE POWER
OF FRANCE.

(1600-1815 A.D.)

DURING the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when the glory of Spain had faded almost entirely away, France came forward upon the stage of empire history and played a prominent part.

For more than a hundred years she kept Europe engaged in constant warfare both by land and sea. Then came a brief period during which she was engaged in an internal conflict of a terrible and bloody character. From thence she emerged with fresh energy and enterprise, and for the next twenty odd years attempted to make for herself a vast European Empire under the head of one who loved to regard himself as a second Charlemagne—Napoleon Bonaparte.

As usual, this prominence among the other countries of Europe was due, not to any great increase of wealth or to provocation from outside, but to the strength of character and the boundless ambition of a series of great men. Let us glance at them as they pass us by upon the march for Empire.

First comes Richelieu, with his small, peaked beard, keen eyes, and inscrutable expression. He was the great cardinal who held all France within his hand



during the reign of Louis the Thirteenth, in the first half of the seventeenth century. He saw that the privileges granted by Henry the Fourth—the Henry of Navarre, who fought the battle of Ivry—to the Huguenots tended to weaken the power of the monarchy by making France a divided nation, and also that the independence of the great feudal nobles must be crushed.

At that time, too, Europe was being torn in pieces by the Thirty Years' War between the Catholic League, headed by the Emperor, and the Protestants of Germany. Here, too, was a means of emphasizing the importance of France.

Within forty years Richelieu had apparently fulfilled his aim of "making Louis the first man in Europe and the second in France"—second, that is, only to himself.

His treatment of La Rochelle, the chief stronghold of the Huguenots, within whose walls they claimed to be practically independent of the royal authority, is a good example of his method.

Regardless of the privileges granted by the late king, Richelieu ordered that a royal fort should be erected in the midst of the city. The Huguenots, naturally alarmed for their independence, drove out the builders, closed the gates of the town, and called on the English to come to their aid. Charles the First of England, however, was just beginning to get involved in the tangled problems of his own kingdom :

and though he sent Buckingham with a fleet to their aid, the duke soon retreated when he found that the wily cardinal had built a huge wall across the mouth of the harbour, so that no ships could enter.

Meanwhile the royal army surrounded the city on the land side, and lay there for a year and a half waiting for the inmates to give in. They held out steadily, however, for their governor, Guiton, had promised to shoot the first man who spoke of surrender. But after living on grass and shell-fish for many months, they received news that their English sympathizers were making an alliance with the cardinal. Then in despair they opened their gates, and remembering the former treatment of their people, expected a fierce religious persecution. But Richelieu calmly assured them that he had no intention whatever of interfering with their religion. All he insisted upon was that they should demolish their fortified walls, and submit to the royal authority. Thus he ended a religious warfare that had kept France in a state of unrest for nearly a hundred years.

Much on the same lines was his treatment of the nobles. Their strong castles were destroyed, their power lessened in every way, and any one who opposed his will became the enemy of France. He kept a prison for such as these in his own house, and within its gloomy depths were wont to disappear any who seemed likely to give trouble. For the cardinal,

in his determination that France should become a great power, knew neither doubt nor scruple.

"I never venture," he once said, "to undertake anything without having well reflected on it; but when once I have resolved, I go straight to my object. I cut down everything, I hew down everything, *and afterwards cover all with my red robe.*"

The part he played in the Thirty Years' War is also characteristic of the man. His own sympathies, as a cardinal of the Roman Catholic Church, would generally be supposed to have been on the side of the Emperor, and against his enemies, who were fighting the battle of Protestantism. But he realized that the success of the Emperor would at once make him the most powerful sovereign in Europe. Hence he supported the Protestant cause with funds, and used his troops to drive out the Spanish army from Italy when they attacked a region held by the Protestants. Later on he declared war against Spain herself; and though he died before it was ended, he was well satisfied with the results of his policy. For France had come out of the struggle with boundaries considerably enlarged, and could now include within them the coveted district of Alsace-Lorraine. It was during this period also that the foundations were being laid of New France in Canada, and of a French Empire in India.

In 1608, Champlain, a bold gentleman adventurer, had built his wooden "habitation" at Quebec, was



soon to make a settlement at Montreal, and, by his wonderful influence over the Red Indian natives, to spread the power of France within the valley of the St. Lawrence. Before the end of the seventeenth century, Canada, with its eleven thousand inhabitants, was wholly in the hands of France, as was also that district at the mouth of the Mississippi which had been named Louisiana, in honour of the French king.

The early years of the eighteenth century saw the French, not only firmly established in certain trading-stations on the coast of India, but likely to bring the whole of the native Mogul Empire under their rule. By the middle of the century they held about a third of the continent. Had France only recognized then, as Britain was about to do, the immense importance of her Eastern Empire, she would never have hampered, and ultimately recalled, Dupleix, one of the greatest geniuses among soldiers and administrators, at the critical moment of his career, and so lost her chance.

But France never maintained a strong hold on these outposts of empire. Richelieu's policy of making every portion of the kingdom, whether at home or abroad, dependent on the royal will, was fatal to the growth of colonies such as these, which needed to develop themselves on independent lines, and to use their natural advantages for their own advancement, instead of merely as a source of wealth for the mother country. And during the next period things were



RICHELIEU IN HIS STATE BARGE.
(From the painting by Delaroche.)

even worse for the colonies, since, as we shall see, Louis the Fourteenth was so engrossed in his plans for winning a European Empire that he cared nothing for the welfare of Canada or India, save only as a means of providing funds for his endless wars.

So Richelieu passes off the stage of history, saying with his last breath, when asked if he forgave his enemies, "I never had any save those of France;" and after a brief interval the brilliant figure of Louis the Fourteenth takes his place as head of the widely-spread French dominions.

During the early years of his reign, when he was still a child, the affairs of state had been in the hands of Cardinal Mazarin, who had hoped to make himself a second Richelieu, and to keep Louis completely under his control. Yet even in those early days he had misgivings as he watched the apparently stupid, solemn child. "He will set off later, but he will go further than others," he foretold; and added uneasily that "he had stuff in him to make four kings and one honest man."

Whether the famous saying, "L'état, c'est moi," was really that of Louis the Fourteenth matters little, for he soon showed, when he came of age, that he meant to represent in his own person the whole of the ruling power. With the exception of Colbert, a plain, blunt man of the people, he would have no advisers, but insisted on every detail of State administration passing

through his own hands. With most men this must have resulted in failure, but Louis was no ordinary character, and showed to equal advantage in almost every department of government.

A great navy was planned, and the army thoroughly reorganized ; means of transit were improved by the making of bridges and canals ; trade was encouraged on the one hand, and literature on the other ; and a careful reorganization of the revenues of the kingdom seemed to place France in a position of great security.

Yet already the seeds of hostility to the royal power were being sown when Louis revoked that Edict of Nantes which had given liberty of conscience to the Huguenots for nearly a hundred years. The result was to send thousands of refugees into exile, and hundreds of those who disregarded the revocation to the convict hulks and the galleys. Nor were other causes of discontent lacking, as we shall soon see.

The foundation of that success of Louis during the early part of his reign, which earned for him the title of the "Grand Monarque," was built upon no firmer basis than that of personal magnificence and outward appeal to the awe and admiration of his subjects. He himself stood as the emblem of the greatness of his office, and all his surroundings tended to swell the ideal of the kingship into something very glorious indeed.

Just outside Paris, at Versailles, he had an immense

palace constructed, the halls and apartments of which were decorated in a very costly manner. It was the report of this magnificence, exaggerated even beyond its reality, that did much to stir up the minds of the peasants in after days against the king. But in the days of the "Grand Monarque" himself it seemed as though the very people who had the most right to complain, since they were often forced to work without payment at the adornment of a palace while their own huts were unfit for habitation, were too dazzled by the splendour of royalty to dream of rebellion, which was, however, to be all the more forcible in days to come.

The chief means by which King Louis meant to glorify his position was by extending the borders of France so as to form a European Empire greater than had been known since the days of Charlemagne. He even published a little treatise, in which, declaring that he was the descendant of that emperor, he laid claim to the whole Spanish monarchy. He overlooked, of course, the fact that France was but a portion of the Frankish Empire, and that Charlemagne was rather the representative of Germany than of the land over which the French monarch was now ruling.

In this first attempt of Louis he was brought to a sudden halt by a country whose insignificance made the circumstance all the more galling. The French were invading the Spanish Netherlands, when Holland, mindful of the danger of so powerful a neighbour at



"THE DREAM OF THE YOUNG TURENNE."

(From the picture by H. P. Motte.)

Turenne was the general who fought most successfully for Louis XIV. The picture requires no verbal description. The incident happened at Sedan, where Turenne's father was an officer.

her doors, managed to force upon Louis a peace with Spain by drawing England and Sweden into alliance with her. From this time dates the king's implacable hatred for the little Dutch republic, against whom his arms were next directed.

It seemed a hopeless thing for Holland to defy the forces of the omnipotent Louis; but she was in the hands of William of Orange, who did not know the meaning of the word despair. When the Dutch asked him in terror what was to be done in face of the huge French army that had already overrun the southern part of Holland, he replied briefly, "We must die in the last ditch." When his people took to their ships with the intention of sailing away from their doomed land, he bade them stay to help him to open the sluices in the dikes and drown the forces of the enemy. The French army retreated in hopeless confusion before the floods, for they could not fight against the sea; and now Germany, realizing her own fate if Holland had not so pluckily stood in the breach, joined her in her defence, and for a while military operations were suspended.

Ten years later Louis began the struggle anew, spurred on by his determination to win the Rhine Provinces; and for the next ten years the war raged in Flanders and Germany, while the resources of France were drained to the uttermost to provide fresh armies in place of those whose bones were left

to bleach upon the battlefields. In this struggle William of Orange, now King William the Third of England, still played a very prominent part, and did more perhaps to prevent Louis from overrunning Europe than any other of his opponents.

The end of this war left France just about where she was before it began, save, of course, for the terrible loss of men and money that she had incurred. Unmindful of his losses, Louis now engaged in a yet more disastrous conflict for the Spanish crown. In this campaign William did not live to take any part, but his great general Marlborough joined the forces of Europe against France, and completed the humiliation of the "Grand Monarque."

The crown of Spain, it is true, remained in the hands of his grandson Philip, thus uniting the kingdoms of France and Spain under one royal family, known in history as the Bourbon dynasty; but the rest of the vast possessions of Spain in Europe were divided up among the other combatants in a way that caused her to be shorn of her chief glory.

Two of the most important results of this redistribution of territory were, first, the cession of Naples and Milan to Austria, which gave that country a hold on Italy that she was to retain until 1866; and second, the fact that England received from France as her share of the spoil Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, and the Hudson Bay region, and thus obtained a foothold



in New France, from which she was able to make herself mistress of the whole colony.

The glory of the "Grand Monarque" was tarnished indeed, but even more by the condition of his own kingdom at the end of his long reign. It is thus described by a wise and fearless subject in addressing the king:—

"The whole of France," he says, "is one great hospital, with no food in it. The people who once loved you so well are now losing their trust in you, their friendship and even their respect for you. You are obliged either to leave their rebellions unpunished, or to massacre people whom you have driven to despair, and who are dying every day of disease brought on by famine; the land is almost uncultivated; the cities and the country have lost their inhabitants; commerce has come to an end, and trade brings in no riches."

And so Louis the Fourteenth moves off the stage of history, saying with almost his last words to the little great-grandson who was to succeed him, "Try to keep peace with your neighbours; I have been too fond of war. Do not imitate me in that, nor in my too great expenditure. Take counsel on all questions, and try to know the best so as always to follow it. Relieve your people as speedily as possible, and do what I have had the misfortune not to be able to do myself."

And so we see the profound truth of the saying of a great Frenchman of later days: "The government of Louis the Fourteenth was a great fact, a powerful and brilliant fact, but it was built on sand."

Forty years later, in the great struggle of the Seven Years' War, France lost not only all her possessions in America, save two little islands off Newfoundland, but met her master in India, where Robert Clive was busy laying the foundations of our Indian Empire.

We come now to the second period of the greatness of France, a period dominated by the figure of a little man with a large head and massive, clear-cut features, who for twenty years was to terrorise Europe and to carve out for himself an empire which, while it lasted, was as real as that of Charlemagne himself.

In the interval of nearly eighty years which elapsed between the death of Louis the Fourteenth and the first prominent appearance of Napoleon Bonaparte, many stirring events had happened. The misery into which France had fallen before the end of Louis's reign had only been intensified in the days of his successor. Unjust taxes, heavy burdens, and shameful oppression were the lot of the peasants, while the life of the nobles continued to be one of luxury and extravagance. It was scarcely worth while to cultivate the little farms when the landlord not only claimed almost the whole of the produce for rent, but was wont to ride with his hunting-party over the young



crops, or keep his flocks of pigeons well fed upon the standing corn. The seed of distrust of the royal power which Louis the Fourteenth had sown by his selfish wars and wanton expenditure, and of the hatred caused by his treatment of the Huguenots, also began to bear fruit.

In 1789 the first mutterings of the storm of the French Revolution were heard—a storm which later on swept over France, and laid low the heads of thousands of her people. Not until the unfortunate king, Louis the Sixteenth, and Marie Antoinette, his queen, had paid the penalty on the bloodstained guillotine was the rage of the nation appeased ; and even after that many of the revolutionists themselves were executed during a Reign of Terror which was only ended by the death of the chief popular leaders.



It was while France was still in the state of disorder which was the necessary outcome of such an upheaval, that Napoleon Bonaparte, a young Corsican officer, stepped forward, and in an incredibly short time had put himself at the helm of the State.

He was but twenty-seven years old when he first proved his skill in warfare as general of the army of the Revolution, which was endeavouring to drive the Austrians from Italy. It was here, too, that he showed the ruthless ambition which was to be his most marked characteristic. Venice, one of the oldest of the free republics of Italy, won no respect from him by reason



ROUGET DE L'ISLE SINGING "THE MARSEILLAISE," OF WHICH HE WAS THE COMPOSER.
(From the painting by Piss, in the Louvre Gallery. Photo by Mansell.)

of the renowned part she had played in the history of the past, but was destroyed and handed over to the power of Austria, in order that France might be the gainer by Flanders and Savoy.

This has been made memorable for ever by Wordsworth's noble sonnet :—



“Once did she hold the gorgeous East in fee,
And was the safeguard of the West : the worth
Of Venice did not fall below her birth.
Venice, the eldest child of Liberty,
She was a maiden city, bright and free ;
No guile seduced, no force could violate ;
And when she took unto herself a mate,
She must espouse the everlasting Sea.

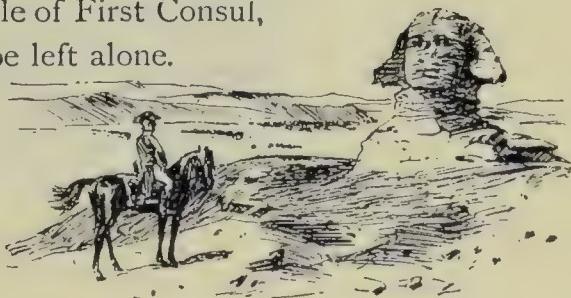
“And what if she had seen those glories fade,
Those titles vanish, and that strength decay—
Yet shall some tribute of regret be paid
When her long life hath reached its final day :
Men are we, and must grieve when even the shade
Of that which once was great is passed away.”

His success in Italy confirmed Napoleon in his plans for the future. “What I have done so far,” he said at this time, “is nothing. I am but at the opening of the career that I am to run. Do you think that my object is to establish a republic in France? What a notion! What the French want is glory, and the satisfaction of their vanity. As for liberty, of that they have no conception. Look at the army! The victories that we have just gained have given the French soldier his true character. I am everything to him. Let the Directory attempt to deprive

me of my command, and they will see who is the master. The nation must have a head—a head who is rendered illustrious by glory, and not by theories of government, fine phrases, or the talk of idealists, of which the French understand not a whit."

We can but glance at the various stages in this race for glory, upon which Napoleon had thus deliberately entered. We see him, whilst "waiting for the pear to ripen"—waiting, that is, to make himself master of Paris—turning his face towards the "gorgeous East," and planning to get Egypt into his hands. For Egypt was on the road to India, and he who possessed it had the key to the riches of the Orient.

"Think," cried Napoleon to his troops, as he marshalled them beneath the mighty Pyramids, "that forty generations look down from these heights." And so, with the encouragement of the spirit of Ancient Egypt in their veins, his soldiers won a great victory over the Mameluke rulers of Egypt at the battle of the Pyramids, and thus indirectly struck a severe blow at the power of Britain. But Egypt was snatched from his grasp by the prompt action of Nelson, who, at the battle of the Nile, destroyed almost the whole of the French fleet. Upon this, Napoleon hurriedly returned to France, leaving his army to get back as best it might; for the time had come to make himself head of the French Republic under the title of First Consul, and for the present the East might be left alone.



From this time Napoleon gathered his forces together to crush the European powers now in array against him, intending afterwards to give all his attention to the punishment and ultimate subjection of the troublesome little British nation, whose fleet had, so far, always succeeded in thwarting his plans at the most inconvenient moment.

The Austrian army was crushed at Marengo, and again at Hohenlinden, and for a while Napoleon, having obtained Belgium and the left bank of the Rhine, was content to make peace. There was a yet more important result of this campaign.

When the various states which made up the Rhine Provinces were handed over to France, a number of petty princes were left without their possessions. It was necessary for the Emperor, who still held nominal sway over the Holy Roman Empire, to compensate these by redistributing territory in such a way as eventually to consolidate a large number of practically independent little states into a few important monarchies, and thus to lay a firm foundation for that union of Germany which was to be the work of future years.

Napoleon was now king of France in all but name, but that position did not satisfy him. He must be marked out as the head of a great empire, not of a mere kingdom. Claiming, therefore, to be the successor of Charlemagne and of Cæsar Augustus, he



NAPOLEON AT ST. HELENA.
(From the painting by Paul Delaroche.)

induced the Pope to come to Paris, and there, in the year 1804, was anointed by him as Emperor. Later on he was crowned again at Milan, as had been the custom for many years with the heads of the old Empire. Two years later, when, after the great battle of Austerlitz, he had humbled Austria and Prussia to the dust, the Holy Roman Empire, which had existed for just over a thousand years, was formally abolished. The Emperor Francis the Second abdicated, but was allowed to assume the new title of Emperor of Austria, and Napoleon took his place as head of a European Empire.

He had already declared his belief that "there will be no rest in Europe until it is under a single chief—an emperor who shall have kings for officers, who shall distribute kingdoms to his lieutenants, and shall make this one king of Italy, that one of Bavaria, this one ruler of Switzerland, that one governor of Holland, each having an office of honour in the imperial household."

This ideal he was now in a position to carry out. His brother Joseph was made king of Naples and Sicily; his brother Louis, king of Holland; his brother-in-law, Murat, duke of Cleves and Berg. He himself assumed the position of protector of a union of the Southern German states, known as the Confederation of the Rhine; and after the defeat of the Prussians at Jena, he created the kingdom of Westphalia for "little



brother Jerome," and gave all Prussia's dominions in Poland to his friend the king of Saxony.

The only check upon this progress of victory came from Britain, whose fleet had, for the second time, annihilated that of France at Trafalgar in 1805. It was the attempt at retaliation made by the emperor in trying to close all the doors of European trade to Britain that really marks the beginning of his downfall. For in his determination to ruin his enemy, he bade fair to ruin also the commerce of every country over which he held control.

He seems, indeed, at this time, as has been well pointed out by one of his biographers, "to have lost the balance of his judgment, and become a curse to his own country and to all others. He cannot be still himself, or give mankind an instant of repose. His neighbours' landmarks become playthings to him ; he cannot leave them alone ; he manipulates them for the mere love of moving them. His island enemy is on his nerves ; he sees her everywhere ; he strikes at her blindly and wildly. And so he produces universal unrest, universal hostility."

Even his best efforts for the good of France were spoilt to some extent by this overwhelming ambition. He reformed the education of the country, but the first thing children must be taught was that loyalty to the emperor was the "whole duty of man," and that he who failed to offer himself for military service



was doomed to eternal punishment in the world to come. The Revolution had come to give liberty to man, and Napoleon had at first appeared as its natural representative ; but now one man was imprisoned because in a private letter he criticised the government, and another because he had dared to profess himself no lover of the emperor.

His achievements gave him little joy. He complained bitterly one day that he had been born too late—that there was nothing great to be done any more ; and longed to have existed in a more primitive age, that he might have appeared to men as a god.



He was already master of Central Europe, but his restless spirit drove him to bring Spain also under his control. The monarch of that country was induced to abdicate, and Joseph Bonaparte, his brother, was crowned as king. When Spain dared to rebel, her people were forced to quail before his victorious arms, and he was able to leave them with the significant threat that if they would not obey his brother they should be treated as a conquered province, and he himself, having assumed the crown, would teach the ill-disposed to respect his authority. This, however, was not to be, for England threw herself into the breach, and began a series of brilliant campaigns, which eventually drove the French from Spain.

Meantime Napoleon, having reconquered Austria, determined to add Russia to his vast empire—an

empire which now stretched from the kingdom of Naples to the shores of the Baltic. It was as though an evil genius was driving him to destruction. When his reduced and starving army entered Moscow, the old capital of Russia, he found the city had been fired before his arrival. Driven to return, the backward march was marked by the bodies of men and horses which lined the route. The cold was intense, the country a desert, and the constant attacks of the Cossack troops upon the army were impossible to withstand. Never was a failure more complete, and his enemies were not slow to use their advantage against him.

Russia, Prussia, and Austria rose in alliance, and near Leipsic, at the "Battle of the Nations," the new army which the emperor had collected was totally defeated. Instantly the other subject kingdoms threw off his yoke, and in an incredibly short time the Empire of Napoleon had vanished. It is small wonder that he failed to realize this, and obstinately refused terms of peace on the condition that he would henceforth confine himself to the borders of France. But this obstinacy led immediately to his downfall, for he was forced, in April 1814, to abdicate the French throne, and to retire in captivity to his tiny island kingdom of Elba. There was still one more scene to be played in the drama of this ambitious, brilliant man, who for the last ten years had held Europe in his hand.

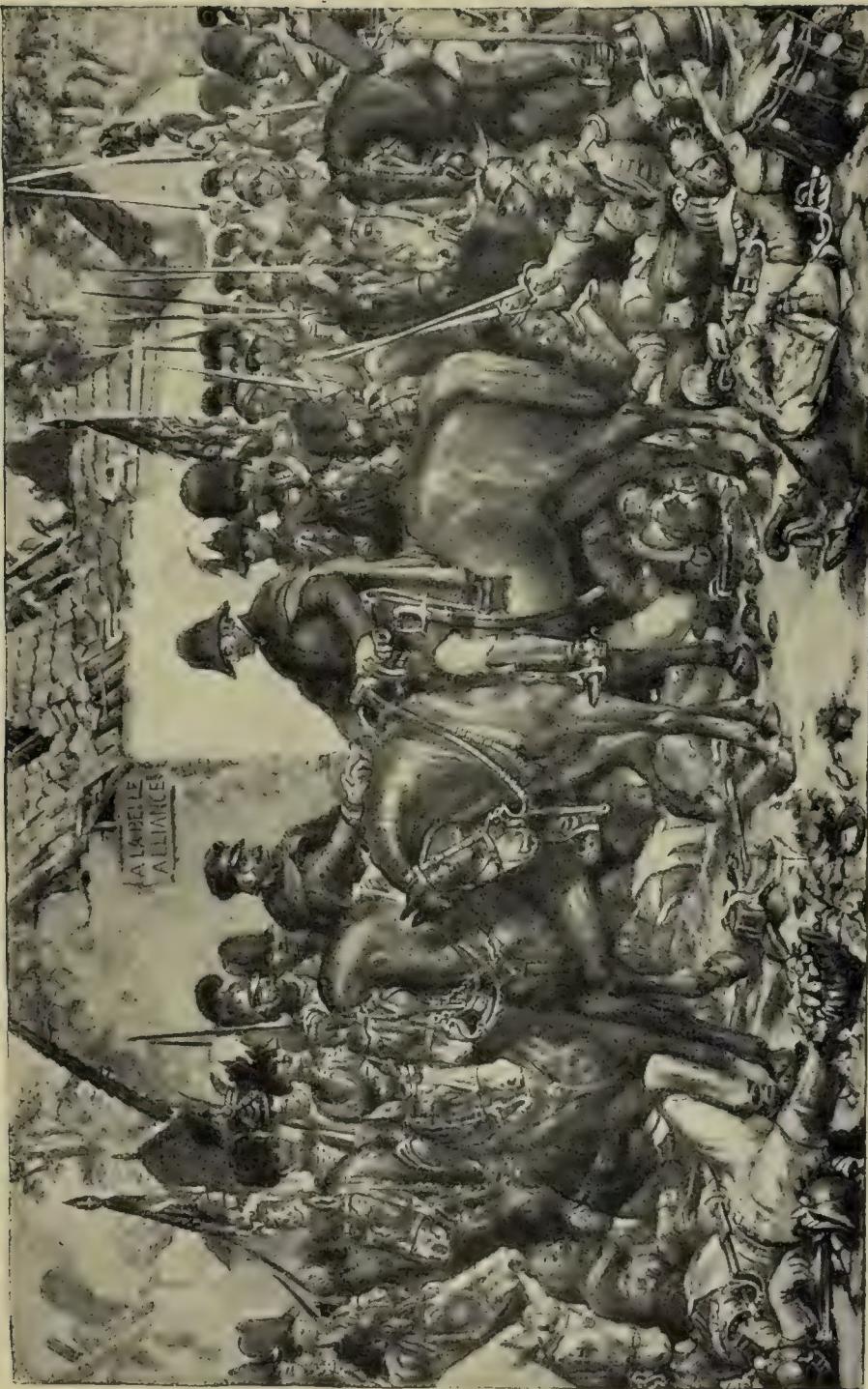
Within a year the captive had escaped ; had gathered an army, headed by his famous Old Guard ; had advanced on Paris, had driven out the Bourbon Louis the Eighteenth, and had regained his throne. For a hundred days he tasted once more the sweets of empire, and then came the final crash.

All along it had been Britain which, at the most critical moments of his career, had baulked his plans of universal conquest. Now, upon the battlefield of Waterloo, she came forward, in alliance with Prussia, to strike the last blow.

We all know the story of that great victory, in which the French army fought so gallantly for the leader whom they worshipped, but in vain.

“All is lost!” Napoleon cried, as he saw the Old Guard fall at their posts ; and he was right. There remained but the last years in the far-off island of St. Helena, where the great soldier who stands in history by the side of Alexander of old was to fret away the remainder of his life. But in after-days France remembered only his greatness as a soldier and a ruler of men, and brought back his bones to Paris, where they rest beneath a worthy tomb.

With Napoleon’s defeat at Waterloo the greatness of the French Empire passed away. It had been based entirely, as we have seen, upon the personality of one man, and was bound therefore to come to an end at his downfall. But the effect of Napoleon’s achieve-



THE MEETING OF WELLINGTON AND BLÜCHER AFTER WATERLOO.
(*The central portion of the fresco by D. MacIise, R.A., in Westminster Palace.*)

ments remained in the important legal reforms and in the settlement of France after the upheaval of the Revolution, as well as in the reconstruction of Europe which had now to take place. The most important points that we can notice here were that several states of Germany became independent, that Holland was made into a kingdom, and that Italy was placed for the most part in the hands of Austria. Let us be clear, therefore, that in 1815 there was no kingdom of Italy or Belgium; no German Empire; that Prussia was an independent state, much smaller than at present; and that France was a kingdom ruled by the brother of the King Louis the Sixteenth who had suffered on the guillotine.

We shall see in our next chapter how Italy became a kingdom, and how the German Empire came into existence.



Chapter XXI.

THE GERMAN EMPIRE.

(1700-1918 A.D.)

WE are now in a position to understand better the steps by which the Holy Roman Empire was transformed into the German Empire, as distinct from Austria and Italy. In order to grasp these steps clearly let us try to realize, to begin with, that the old Empire of Germany consisted of three hundred petty states, ruled by kings, bishops, dukes, or counts, without any common interest to bring them together.

The first attempt at consolidation—that is, of uniting some of these together under one ruler—had been made, as we have seen, by Napoleon; but there were still thirty-eight independent states when the great Congress of Vienna met, after the fight at Waterloo, to consider the settlement of Europe after the upheaval caused by Napoleon.

Of these states the most important by far were Austria and Prussia; and the question now arose as to which of these was to have the controlling power in Germany.

At first it seemed impossible that Austria should be the leader among purely German states, for her population was of a completely mongrel kind, consisting of Slavs, Poles, Hungarians, Jews, and many

others. She held, however, Lombardy and Venice, the richest states of Italy ; she possessed Metternich, that man of iron will, who opposed all changes, and was determined to maintain the independence of the German states in order to check the power of Prussia ; and her sovereign was the inheritor, though in name only, of the title borne by Charlemagne.

Hence for fifty years she was able to maintain herself as head of a union of "the sovereign princes and Free Towns of Germany,"—an unsatisfactory arrangement enough, which could only last until Prussia was strong enough to throw off all connection with her rival. Before we see how this came about, let us glance backward at the story of Prussia, which, though brief enough, is one of the most striking in history.

Early in the thirteenth century a band of returned Crusaders, known as the Teutonic Knights, had settled on a wooded tract of country lying along the Baltic coast, and in time made the district, which they called Prussia, prosperous enough. But it was a weak little province in those days, and early in the seventeenth century was united with the neighbouring state of Brandenburg. Its growth in importance seems to have depended entirely on the character of its rulers ; for in the days of the "Great Elector" Frederick William it held its own so well in the struggle with Louis the Fourteenth that in 1700 it became

a kingdom. Still, however, it played no prominent part till the reign of Frederick William the First, who, though he hated progress, and was indeed scarcely civilized in his own person, laid the foundations of Prussia's future greatness by gathering together a remarkably fine army.

He had a great weakness for tall soldiers, and would pay any price to get a six-foot Grenadier into his famous regiment. It is hinted, indeed, that he even went so far as to kidnap a man of extra height from any country where he was to be procured. He looked to see his warlike tastes reproduced in his son Frederick ; but, to his disgust, the lad seemed to care only for music and poetry, and for this reason was so persecuted by his rough old father that he determined to escape from Prussia, when he was about eighteen, and retire into private life. When this plan was discovered the wrath of the king was unbounded. The prince was thrown into prison, condemned to death, and saw with horror his friend and accomplice executed outside his window. His own life, indeed, was only saved by the intervention of the kings of Europe, and from that time he was obliged, outwardly at least, to submit to the old king's will.

Yet the love of military glory must have been, after all, in his blood, for when, after his accession in 1740, his subjects looked for a reign of peace, they found themselves greatly mistaken. The new king, the

future Frederick the Great, was determined to advance the civilization and progress of Prussia in every direction ; but the province must first become famous in Europe through the extension of its borders by conquest.

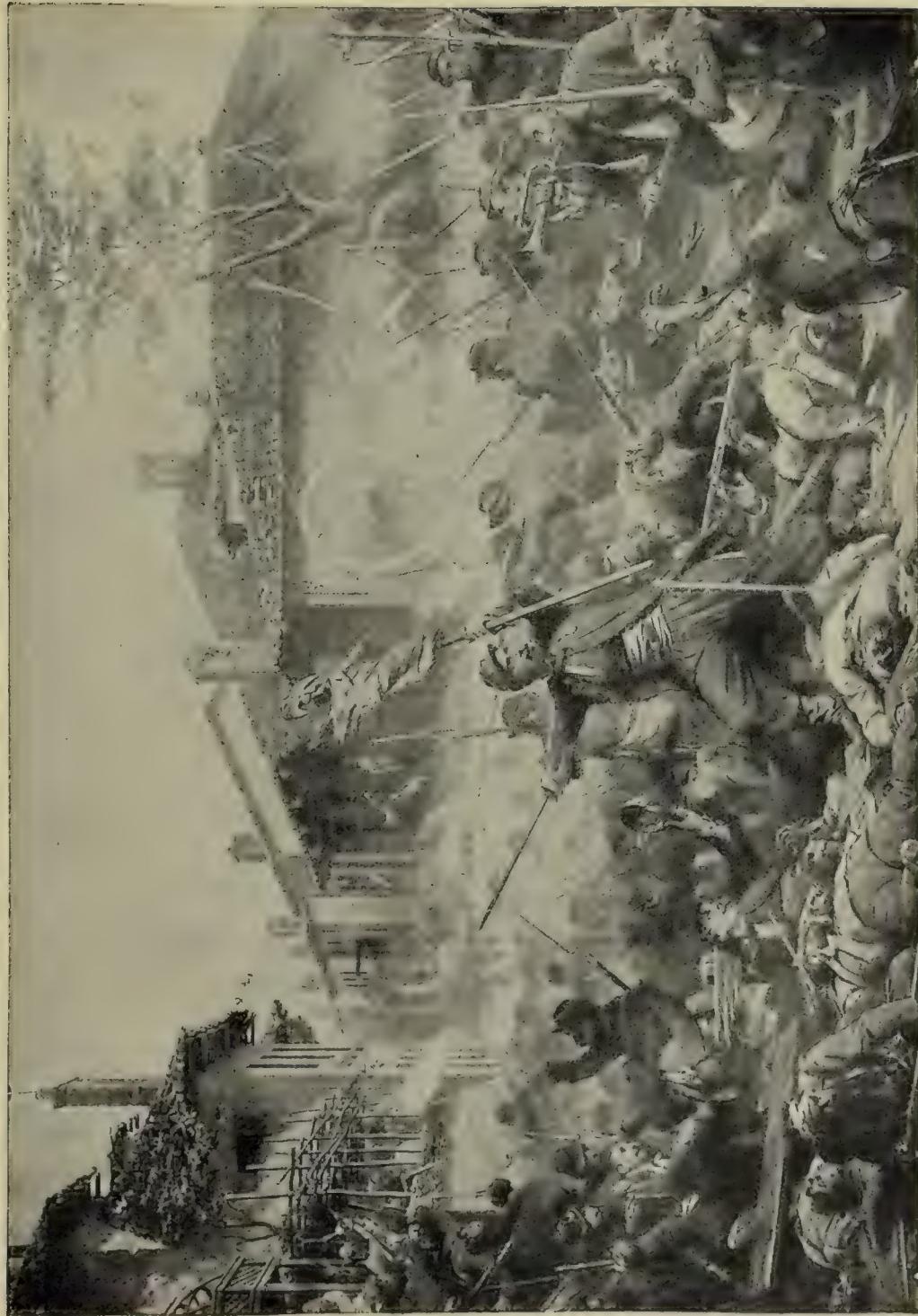
Hence we find this "royal robber" annexing Silesia, the "most precious jewel" in the crown of Maria Theresa, who had just succeeded to the throne of the Emperor ; and this high-handed act of his led a few years later to the great Seven Years' War, in which all the countries of Europe were engaged.

England alone fought upon the side of Prussia in this conflict ; and thus, by opposing the French, managed to obtain the possessions of the latter in Canada and India.

Hard-pressed on all sides, and ultimately deserted by his English allies, Frederick yet emerged from the struggle the foremost man in Europe as far as military glory was concerned.

His latter years were spent in worthier fashion, in furthering the prosperity of his country, which now included Silesia and part of Poland. Within the space of thirty years Europe had learnt to look with deep respect at the hitherto unknown kingdom by the Baltic shores.

At the Congress of Vienna, therefore, we find Prussia taking a prominent position. In return for the loss of Poland, she had gained half the kingdom



A SCENE IN THE HISTORY OF ITALY—THE BATTLE OF MAGENTA.
(From the picture by Yvon. In the Versailles Gallery.)

of Saxony, as well as the Rhine Provinces. She had played an important part in the Napoleonic wars ; and by reorganizing her whole military system and the liberation of all her serfs, she was fast advancing on the road of progress.

Her ruler, however, at this critical point was the weak and undecided Frederick William the Third ; hence, as we have seen, it was Austria which at first managed to get the upper hand. For the next thirty years Austria, under Metternich, was able to keep things in Germany much as they were by steadily opposing any marked changes, and by preventing any idea of union by playing off the states one against the other. The great minister was now free to accomplish his chief aim, which was to get a firm grip upon Italy. A revolution in 1821 gave him his opportunity ; and after defeating the insurgents, the greater part of the country fell once more under the heel of her ancient tyrant. For thirty years Italy groaned in bondage ; for though Piedmont, Naples, and the States of the Church were nominally free from Austria's control, they were powerless to help the other provinces. Italy became, as Metternich contemptuously phrased it, "a mere geographical expression."

Yet there was much real life and seething activity in Italy. Everywhere secret societies banded men together to revolt, and every few years saw a brief and hopeless outbreak against despotic rule. Mazzini,

an ardent patriot, formed a society known as "Young Italy," and never ceased to impress upon the people that only in their unity would they find hope of freedom. When driven from Italy he fled to England, and by dint of a constant shower of revolutionary pamphlets kept the spirit of revolt alight.

Then those states which were independent of Austria began to move. Naples forced its Bourbon king to substitute a constitutional government for a despotic monarchy, and the Pope granted certain liberties to the States of the Church.

All Italy, save those districts under Austrian control, was now on the highroad towards political freedom, and she was able to turn her eyes towards the king of Piedmont, whose well-known hatred for Austria marked him out as a suitable leader in revolt.

The news of the fall of Metternich from power in 1848 gave the required signal. For the first time in history the whole nation rose from Etna to the Alps, and it looked as though the Austrians would be driven out at one blow. But it seemed impossible for provinces so unaccustomed to union to act together. The Pope drew back when war was actually declared. The king of Naples, jealous of the king of Piedmont, withdrew his troops. In the battle of Novara, Austria seemed to crush Italy once more to the very dust.

But already new hopes were arising. Piedmont, whose king had abdicated in favour of his son Victor

Emmanuel, began to develop in a remarkable manner under the wise guidance of her great statesman Cavour, and to become the rallying-point of the whole country. The latter hoped to win over France to the help of Italy ; but France, bribed with the offer of Lombardy, withdrew from the alliance, and Cavour was forced for a while to give in. Once more, however, he came forward with the war-cry, "Italy will do her own work," and within a few years had obtained Lombardy from France at the price of the cession of Savoy and Nice, and had forced the French king to acknowledge Victor Emmanuel's title, "King of Italy." Fresh vigour came to the land in the enthusiasm caused by Garibaldi, who, with his thousand red-shirted followers, drove the Bourbon troops from Sicily, seized Naples, and prepared to march on Rome.



Garibaldi.

The Pope appealed to Austria for protection, and Cavour, anticipating the inevitable result, at once occupied the States of the Church. Marching without opposition to Naples, the brave Victor Emmanuel was there openly saluted as King of Italy. Save for Rome, all Italy was now free from Austrian control, and the life-work of Cavour was accomplished.

The Franco-Prussian war in 1870 settled also the fate of Rome, and since that time Italy has been united under one king. The blow thus struck gave the final touch to the downfall of Austria as the successful rival of Prussia.

During these years the affairs of Germany had been in a most unsettled condition, owing to the determination of one party to uphold the independence of the various states, and of another to establish the unity of the empire. Both parties agreed only in looking towards Prussia as their leader in the struggle against Austria, and combined together to offer King Frederick William the imperial crown. But he, poor, weak monarch that he was, knew well that this would inevitably mean a war with Austria—a war he was quite unable to engineer; and so he refused with bitterness “a crown that had been picked out of the mud.” The unification of Germany was left to the great Bismarck, minister of King William the First, who in 1861 succeeded his brother on the Prussian throne.

It was left to Bismarck to realize quite clearly that neither union nor progress was possible to Germany while the jealousy and opposition of Austria barred the way. Austria must first be got rid of altogether.

Seizing his chance when Austria had been weakened by the struggle in Italy, he claimed from Denmark the states of Schleswig-Holstein and called on Austria to help. Very reluctantly she did so; but when the states had been ceded to the two powers, it became evident that Bismarck meant to annex them to Prussia, regardless of any claim of Austria to share in the booty. It was a mere excuse for declaring war,

and though all Germany, fearful of his high-handed policy, was antagonistic, Bismarck stood firm. In 1866 war was declared between Austria and Prussia, and though the actual forces of the former were greater, the latter was the conqueror. But Bismarck wisely did not press his advantage too far. He would not allow his army to enter Vienna in triumph, and contented himself with the condition that Austria should be permanently excluded from Germany altogether.

From this time Bismarck, who had now completely won the confidence of the nation, aimed openly at uniting all the German states under one emperor in the person of his master the king of Prussia.

The fact that France would not submit to this sudden increase of strength without a struggle, did not at all deter him. He saw in such a struggle the chief means of drawing together the various independent states in one united effort for victory and of establishing a new empire in Germany.

Fortune played into his hands. The southern states of Germany were jealous of Prussia, and it seemed most unlikely that they would join in the war. At that moment France seized the opportunity to demand the cession of all those states that lay on the left bank of the Rhine. This prospect was appalling, and each state hastened to put itself under the protection of Prussia, and within a short time was under her military control.

Still, King William hesitated to take the final step of declaring war against France, and sent a telegram to Bismarck, which the latter received while sitting in his room in Berlin discussing matters with Moltke, the Prussian general. The message was couched in very undecided terms. The great minister determined, even at the risk of offending his sovereign, to take a definite step. Turning to the general, he asked him if he were ready to fight ; and being answered in the affirmative, he drew his pencil through certain words in the telegram, so that it appeared to sanction the appeal to arms. This was then published, and war was declared.

The result of this struggle was an overwhelming defeat for France, which, prostrate at her conqueror's feet, was forced to give up to Germany the province of Alsace-Lorraine, which had belonged to her since the days of Louis the Fourteenth, and to pay a huge war indemnity.

It was the hour of Bismarck's greatest triumph. In 1871, in the historic palace of Versailles, the Prussian king was hailed as the German Emperor by the representatives of the rulers of the different states. It is well for us to note carefully his exact title. He was not *Emperor of Germany*, for he had not conquered and brought into subjection the various divisions of the land. He was merely the head of a confederation of princes, "first among his peers," and though all-

powerful as king of Prussia, stood in relation to the rulers of the other states as their accepted head.

From that time France has been a republic; and the German Empire developed with great rapidity, and became one of the great commercial countries of the world. Under William the Second the German military spirit, already strong by history and training, was encouraged, the army was increased, and a powerful fleet constructed. The desire for territorial expansion by the sword brought on the Great War of 1914, which terminated in 1918 in the abdication of the Emperor and the destruction of the German military power.

Chapter XXII.

THE BRITISH EMPIRE.

(1500-1908 A.D.)

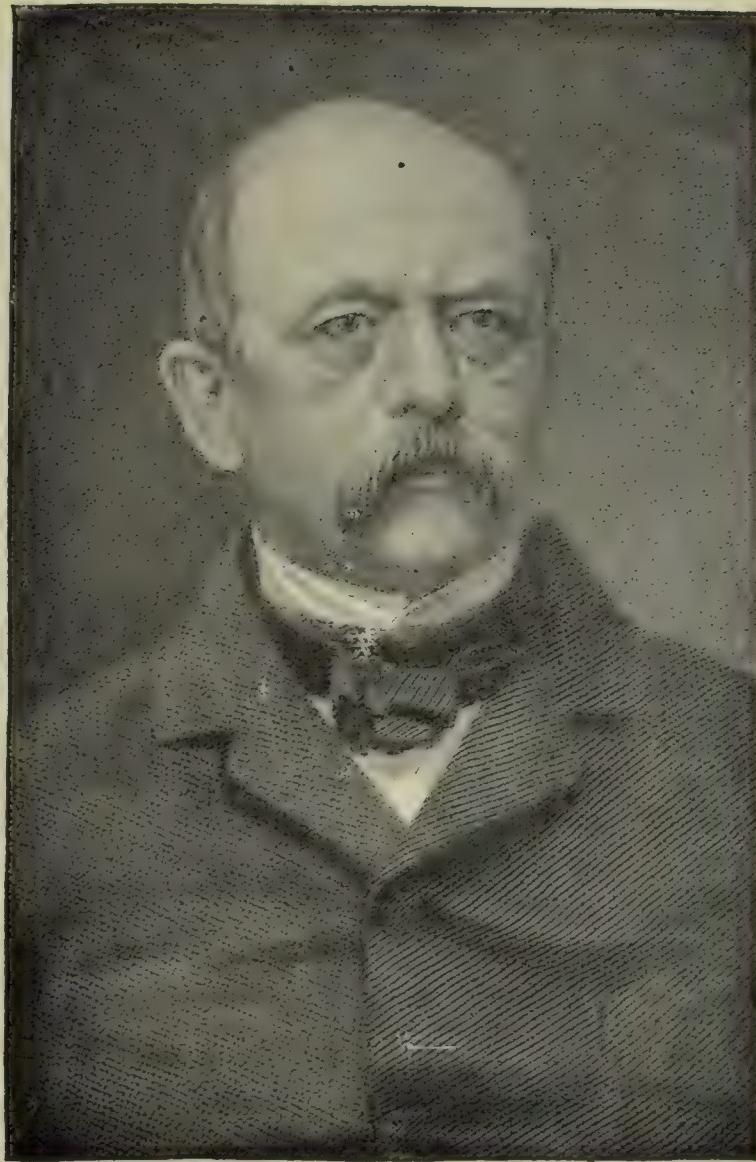
“ FAIR is our lot—oh, goodly is our heritage !
 (Humble ye, my people, and be fearful in your mirth !)

For the Lord our God most High,
 He hath made the deep as dry,
 He hath smote for us a pathway to the ends of all the earth !”

RUDYARD KIPLING.

SUCH is the fine and lofty note struck by the Empire poet of our day for one of the most wonderful of the great empires of the world.

If we look at a map of the British Empire of to-day we cannot fail to be struck by the fact that the



PRINCE BISMARCK.

“Britains beyond the Sea” cover an extent of land compared with which that of the mother-country is very small indeed.

East and west, north and south, this great Empire stretches—from the Atlantic to the Pacific, across the vast American continent; comprising also the island continent of Australia and New Zealand, the great Asiatic peninsula of India, and the greater part of South Africa, besides many important islands and outposts on the coast-line of every continent.

These wide-spreading lands have been won in many different ways—some by conquest, some by right of discovery, some by treaty or mutual arrangement. But all have been added to the Empire by the daring enterprise and endeavour of those who went forth from the little mother-country—not her kings, not always her great men as the world counts greatness, but unknown adventurers, rough sailor-men, and clerks and officers who had yet to prove their worth when they left these shores. It has been said that the British Empire was gained by a series of accidents. It is certainly true that no British sovereign ever set forth deliberately to carve out an empire for himself, as did Cyrus, and Alexander, and Cæsar, and Charlemagne.

No attempt was made, however, before the end of the fifteenth century to conquer or discover for purposes of colonization. Before that time all the

energies of Englishmen were devoted, first to a hard struggle for internal freedom, and then to a long series of wars undertaken to decide the question as to whether England was to form part of a Continental empire, of which France was the head.

But when England had won her freedom, and had become entirely separated from France, she had already begun to knit her various forces together into a united whole, and to look beyond the seas for a more extensive field in which to employ them. Her increase in population made her sons restless for a wider scope for their energies. The increase of trade which took place when her people were not continually engaged in fighting made them look with longing eyes to the far-off countries from which came rumours of boundless wealth, of cities of gold, of the "lands where the spices grow."

The discoveries of Columbus, and all the boundless legend and mystery which enveloped the New World, had already kindled the spark of colonial enterprise in our country before the dawn of the sixteenth century. John Cabot, a merchant of Bristol, four years after the report of the first voyage of Columbus had reached England, obtained leave from Henry the Seventh to "seek out, discover, and find whatsoever isles, countries, regions, or provinces of the heathen or infidels in what part of the world soever they be, which before this time have been unknown to all

Christians." Forthwith he set out in 1497, and crossing the Atlantic came upon a lonely coast and a fog-bound island situated in a sea that was swarming with fish. And thus, by his discovery of the coast of Labrador and the island of Newfoundland, Cabot became the pioneer on our path of Empire in the New World.

During the "spacious days of Queen Elizabeth," some seventy years later, the spirit of enterprise and discovery was strong throughout all Western Europe. Spain had by this time won for herself the richest and most powerful empire of the Modern World, and held not only America but the highway of the ocean in her grasp. It was therefore necessary for England to find some excuse for attacking the Spanish foreign dominions, if her path of empire was not to be finally barred. The "accident" of the marriage of Queen Mary with Philip of Spain, and the consequent claim of the latter, after his wife's death, to become England's king, furnished sufficient pretext; and a band of rollicking sea-dogs, full of energy and daring, set forth in their "private adventure" ships to contest the right of Spain to be Mistress of the Seas.

Foremost among these was "Franky Drake," the hero of Devon, who before long was to be known to the Spaniards as "El Draco," the dragon of the seas. In 1577, having robbed the Spanish treasure towns in South America under the very eyes of their rulers,



*Medal struck to commemorate the
Defeat of the Armada.*



DRAKE ON BOARD THE "REVENGE."
(From the picture by Seymour Lucas, R.A.)

and brought back his ships full of Spanish gold, Drake set forth on his famous voyage round the world, which, though it brought us no actual possession at the time, pointed the way for others to follow on the sea road to India and the East, and set aside for ever the sole right to sail across the Pacific which Spain had hitherto claimed as her own:

Fired by his example, other pioneers went forth to try their strength against Spain, or to discover fresh fields for enterprise. Martin Frobisher and John Davis explored the north-eastern coasts of the American continent in their attempts to find that North-West Passage to India which had so seized upon the imagination of Englishmen in the sixteenth century. Sir Humphrey Gilbert set out to colonize Newfoundland; and though he was forced to return, owing to the lawlessness of his followers, only to meet his death on his little frigate, the *Squirrel*, which was "devoured and swallowed up by the sea," he had not really failed.

Hard upon his footsteps followed Sir Walter Raleigh, who, taught by Gilbert's experience of the cold and fogs of the northern coast, founded a colony on the coast north of Florida, and called it Virginia, after the Virgin Queen. In those days, however, men were more ready to fight for Spanish gold, or to search for impossible sea-passages which would lead to more gold, than to face the steady toil of colonizing un-



An Elizabethan sea-dog.

familiar ground ; and Raleigh's projected colony in North America did not become a permanent settlement until the days of James the First, when our first American colony was taken up by a "Chartered Company," and, by the splendid endeavour of Captain John Smith, became securely settled.

Our next attempt at colonization was made by the Pilgrim Fathers during the early part of the seventeenth century. Preferring the freedom of an unknown world to the religious intolerance at home, these men set forth in 1620 to make for themselves an abiding place on those sea-bound lands of North America which, on the report of John Smith, had been already named New England.

There they won their way, little by little, in the face of constant attacks from the Red Indians who inhabited the dense forests which bordered their settlements. It was only by great sacrifice of human life and the endurance of terrible hardships that the foundations were laid of the future United States of America.

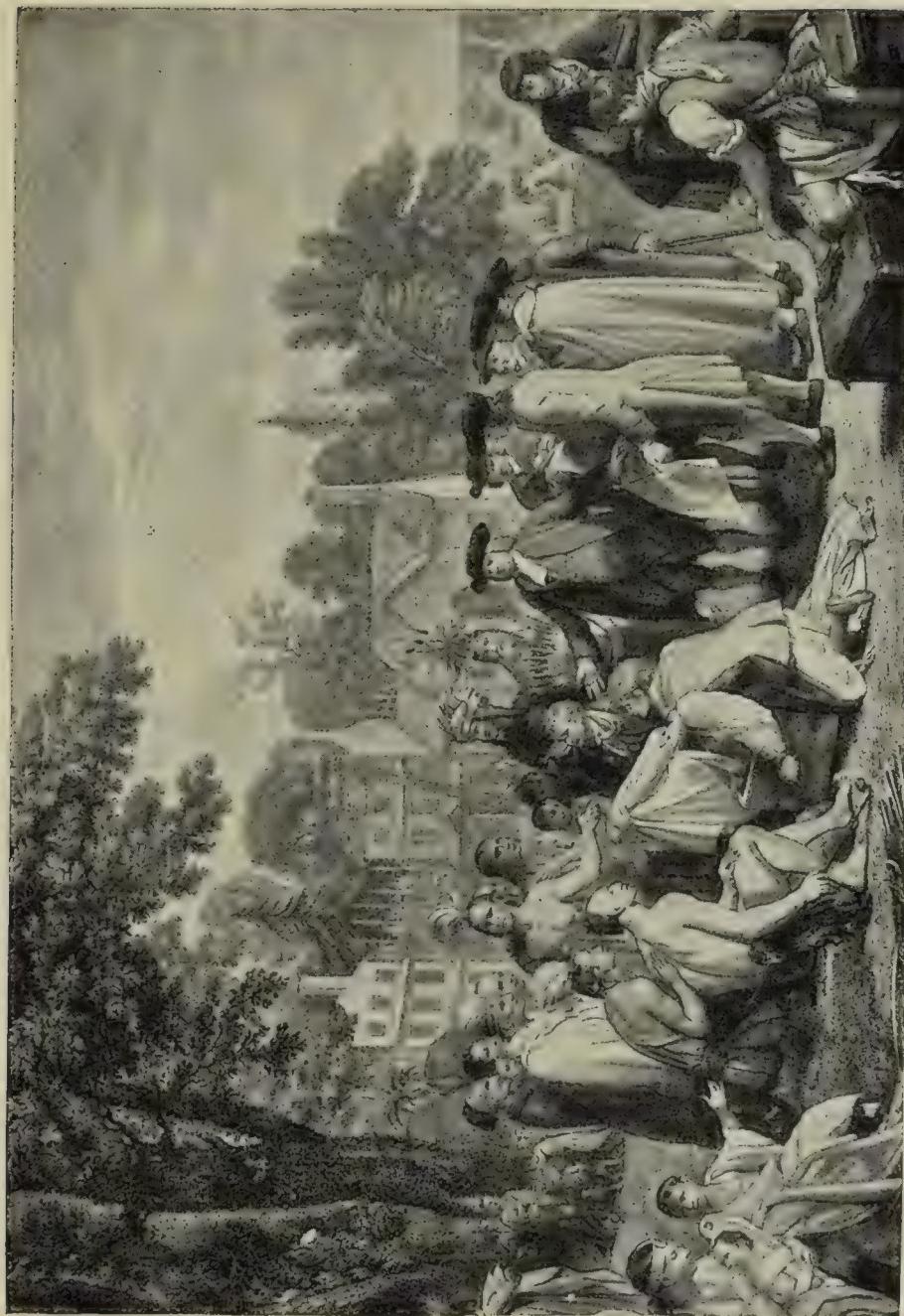
Once more we find Britain face to face with the diminished powers of Spain, when, under Cromwell's direction, a determined and successful attempt was made to dispute the latter's possession of the rich West India Islands. In 1655 his generals took Jamaica—the first of our colonies to be taken from a European power—and they obtained not only a



valuable "free trade" post for the English merchants, who had been so jealously excluded from Spanish commerce, but also the command of the rich sugar produce for which the island was famous. Later on, fresh settlements were made in North America by the Quaker, William Penn, who gave his name to the state of Pennsylvania; and by others, who were impelled by the desire for freedom from religious oppression, or who wished for a wider scope for the energies of those who had been failures at home. And so the period of settlement comes to an end, and that of conquest begins.

We have seen that at the beginning of the reign of James the First, Britain possessed not a foot of settled territory outside her own. At the end of the reign of Queen Anne she had a firm hold upon the eastern seaboard of North America, some fortified settlements held by the East India Company for trade purposes on the coast of India, some stations on the west coast of Africa, the most important of the West India Islands, and a flourishing trade with almost every port in the world.

She had also, by means of a successful war with Holland, established her right to carry on her commerce in her own ships instead of in those of the Dutch. Her one serious rival at the beginning of the eighteenth century was France, whose power had increased as fast as that of Spain had waned; and



WILLIAM PENN MAKING A TREATY WITH THE INDIANS.

(From an Eighteenth Century Print.)



about this period a long struggle began between Britain and France as to who should be the victor in the fight for oversea empire.

The early part of this great contest between France and Britain was fought out sometimes in America, sometimes in India. Early in the seventeenth century the foundations of New France in Canada had been laid at Quebec and Montreal by the Frenchman, Samuel Champlain. By the year 1660 the whole region from Hudson Bay to the borders of South America had been nominally granted by France to a colonizing company, which utterly ignored all British rights of settlement, and proceeded to plant a colony at the mouth of the Mississippi River, and to connect it with the towns on the St. Lawrence by a line of forts. These forts would become a serious source of danger to the British colonists, who were now prevented from making settlements further to the westward. This plan was checked for a time by the War of the Spanish Succession (1702-14) in Europe, at the end of which Britain gained Gibraltar and Minorca, the French province of Acadia (now Nova Scotia), and the Hudson Bay Territory.

Acadia, which had been recovered by France, was the chief point of attack during the Continental war of 1742-48, during which we hear for the first time of a fight between the rival French and British Companies in India. This struggle was, however, only the

preliminary to a far more serious contest, known as the Seven Years' War, which was to end in the assured supremacy of the British in both Canada and India.

Just before this war broke out in Europe, the French governor of Canada began in earnest to build the line of connecting forts between the St. Lawrence River and the mouth of the Mississippi. In vain did the general sent out by Britain try to intercept him ; and the first years of the war in Europe opened tragically for the British. In India she suffered deep injury and insult by the terrible incident known as the "Black Hole of Calcutta;" Minorca was lost ; and two of her most important outposts of the North-West Frontier were seized by Montcalm, the governor of Canada.

It was at this juncture that General Wolfe determined to carry the war into the heart of the enemy's country by an attack on Quebec, the "key" of Canada. In the darkness of night he led his men up the precipitous Heights of Abraham, and in the struggle that ensued breathed his last at the moment of victory. In the course of another year the French power in Canada was completely broken, and the whole of the region was now in British hands.

Meantime a no less important struggle was taking place in India under very different conditions, though the motive in both—the struggle of Britain to get the better of France for trade purposes—was the same.



Death of Wolfe.



THE ORIGIN OF MADRAS: THE FOUNDING OF FORT ST. GEORGE BY
THE EAST INDIA COMPANY IN 1639.

(From a drawing by R. Caton Woodville, R.I.)

To understand these conditions, we must remember that, unlike Canada, India possessed an ancient civilization, and belonged to the once powerful Mogul Empire. Hence Britain was not fighting against savages in alliance with France, as in North America, but against civilized native princes in the same alliance.

Between the years 1600 and 1756 the British had gained possession of three important trading stations at the places now known as Madras, Bombay, and Calcutta. The French, in their settlement at Pondicherry, were under the able leadership of Dupleix, who conceived the very wise idea of training the natives to act as soldiers, or Sepoys as they came to be called, under the French flag. He also took part in the quarrels of native chiefs in such a way as to prove the importance to them of the French alliance, since he with whom Dupleix sided was almost always the winner.

The French governor was determined to extend the French rule in India, and for this it was necessary to drive out the British altogether. Madras was attacked, and it seemed impossible for the British to stand against Dupleix and his powerful allies, when a champion appeared in the person of a young clerk, named Robert Clive, who was in the service of the merchant traders of the city.

Clive had been a wild and troublesome boy, and his parents had been thankful to send him out of the



country as a clerk in the East India Company's service. But he was destined, nevertheless, to lay the foundation of our Indian Empire; and gladly exchanging the pen for the sword went forth to attack Arcot, the centre of the native government which Dupleix had just set up. In the midst of a violent thunderstorm he appeared before the walls, and within a few hours the natives had fled in panic from the city.

This was the first of a series of triumphs for Clive, which ended in the recall of Dupleix to France, and the transfer of the allegiance of many of the native chiefs from the French to the British. Then a terrible event took place. The native ruler of Bengal, Surajah Dowlah, greedy for the property of the merchants of Calcutta, threw one hundred and forty-five Englishmen and one English woman into a small dungeon—the Black Hole of Calcutta—and left them there to endure the horrors of a sultry Indian night. Only twenty-three lived to tell the tale, and Clive at once set out to avenge the rest. In 1757, two years before the fall of Quebec, he met the troops of Surajah Dowlah at Plassey, and there completely routed them in a victory which finally settled the question as to which European nation was to be supreme in India.

As time went on, one province after another was added to those already won. Just a century after the battle of Plassey, in the terrible Indian Mutiny, it

seemed for a time as though our hard-won Empire was to be torn from us by the native soldiers. But after a time of great anxiety the revolt was suppressed, while the chief result of the Mutiny was to put an end to the rule of the East India Company, and to place the country under the direct control of the British Crown.

We have seen how Canada had been won for Britain ; we must now see how the colonies which lay south of the St. Lawrence, on the sea-board of the Atlantic, were lost to her.

Fear of France, as well as loyalty to the mother-country, had impelled these states to do their best to support the latter during the war. But when the struggle ended, it was considered necessary to maintain an army for purposes of protection within the borders of America, and to the cost of this the colonists were asked to contribute.

This was fair enough, but the colonists were suspicious and resentful. They were not represented in the British Parliament ; their trade had been always conducted under galling restrictions imposed by Britain ; and the fear of France was no longer before their eyes. They refused to pay the taxes imposed, and these were gradually taken off until only one, that on tea, remained.

But the colonists had now gone too far to draw back, even if they would. When a cargo of tea



arrived in the port of Boston, the citizens threw it into the harbour. This brought matters to a crisis ; troops were sent out, and fighting began.



The Americans had no regular army. Their soldiers were ragged, ill-fed, and untrained. But they had as general George Washington, one who never knew when he was beaten, and who had the power of inspiring deep loyalty and enthusiasm in his followers. A year after the war began the thirteen colonies published their Declaration of Independence ; and after a bitter and protracted struggle, during which France came to the help of the colonists, Britain recognized the United States of America as a separate country.

At first the feeling in Britain about this event was extremely bitter ; but in later days, when the United States had grown and expanded right across the continent of North America, the home country began to treat the Americans with respect and confidence, and to draw closer to them in that bond of affection which is but natural between men of the same race.



We have seen how all through this period nearly every event in colonial affairs had been but an accompaniment to a war with France.

We come now to the last of these wars, which arose out of the need for protecting our colonies from foreign invasion by ensuring our position as Mistress of the Sea.

By land, during the early years of the nineteenth

century, the Emperor Napoleon had made himself supreme in Europe. His next endeavour was to gain complete mastery of the sea as well.

In those days Britain could depend but little on her land forces, but her fleet was invincible. Wherever it met that of France the victory was to the British sea-dogs, and at Trafalgar, in 1805, the sea-power of France was destroyed at one blow.

The breaking up of Napoleon's land empire by an alliance of European powers gave Britain time to strengthen her army, and by the battle of Waterloo, in 1815, the defeat of Napoleon was made complete. Through the terms of peace after the war, Britain gained Malta, Ceylon, some West India Islands, Mauritius, and the Cape of Good Hope.

The British colonies gained throughout the eighteenth century were won, as we have seen, by dint of hard fighting and final conquest.

In the early years of Queen Victoria's reign, however, a very important addition was made to these colonies by means of exploration and discovery.

In 1770 the coast-line of Australia and New Zealand had been explored by Captain Cook, and his report was the cause of a settlement of convicts made some years later on the shore of Sydney Cove. Many of these convicts earned their freedom, and settled down as citizens in what is now known as New South Wales. Then explorers went farther afield, crossed



*A gold miner.*

the mountains, made their way up rivers, and finally the whole continental seaboard was occupied without striking a blow. The discovery of gold brought a vast increase of population to the south, while stock-farmers for the rich sheep pastures of the north came in a constant stream from the home country. In 1855 Australia was granted responsible government, and became in 1901 a self-governing Commonwealth, while New Zealand was ceded to us by native chiefs in 1840.

There is an important difference between the British Empire and those earlier empires whose stories we have read.

In olden days the word Empire implied a number of subject states, compelled to pay tribute and to obey a strong central power by which they had usually been conquered. The British Empire, however, is rather a union of different countries and races under one sovereign, who is the link which binds them all together. Apart from this allegiance, however, these colonies are now free in almost every case to govern themselves, and to use the produce of their lands to their own advantage—a state of things which would never have entered the minds of the empire-makers of bygone days. Only in the case of India does the British Sovereign keep the title of Emperor and govern by means of British officers—a condition of affairs which is made necessary by the peculiar conditions of that country.

*Indian native soldiers.*

THE END.

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